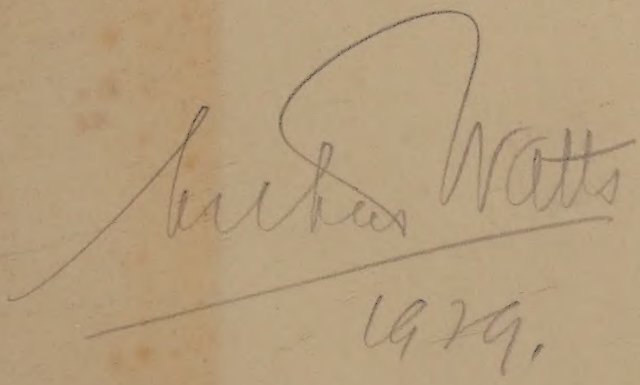

A SHORT
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A SHORT
HISTORY OF MORALS

BY

J. M. ROBERTSON

LONDON:
WATTS & CO.,
17 JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.4
1920

ISSUED FOR THE
RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION,
LIMITED

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CORRIGENDA

Page 1, line 2 from bottom, *for* ' guest ' *read* ' quest '

P. 20, footnote, *for* ' Trans. in Soc. Sci. Series ' *read* ' trans. 1890 ; Sonnenschein '

P. 148, line 19 (fourth word), *for* ' Thorius ' *read* ' Thorium '

P. 272, line 2, *for* ' fatalist's ' *read* ' fabulist's '

P. 283, *for* § 6 *read* § 7

P. 287, *for* § 7 *read* § 8

PART I

INTRODUCTORY

Chapter I

ETHICS AND LIFE

It does not seem likely, on the face of the case, that any new discussion of ethics will have much effect on conduct, private or collective. Socrates, who, faced by the general Greek opinion that virtue cannot be taught, is so often made by Plato to argue the contrary (and yet again to revert to the popular opinion), compassed in the end only a dramatic confirmation of the pessimistic view—a result which, in respect of his tactics, is hardly surprising. And Aristotle, in his masterly though imperfectly wrought plan of making ethics and economics a preparation for politics, seems to have had no more influence on collective Athenian conduct that had the vain Utopia, the brilliant verbal sophistic, the harsh scheme of law or the ethical ballooning of Plato. Intent on ascertaining the Good, they apparently failed to grapple with the admittedly larger problem of Evil.

Apparently, we say, because it may be that on that point, despite Plato's handling of the case through Socrates, they were fundamentally pessimistic. It was told of Plato, by Aristotle, that he was once announced to lecture on The Supreme Good; that many went expecting to hear a discussion and comparison of the various forms of Good; and that they were treated instead to a discourse on mathematics, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, with the common (Pythagorean) explanation that "The Good was The One"—as contrasted (so Grote explains) with the Infinite or Indeterminate, which was Evil.[1] This suggests a very practical despair of "the best, and its visionary guest," as against much later Greek optimism about the non-entity of evil. And Aristotle's pronouncement that,

[1] Grote, *Plato and the other Companions of Sokrates*, ed. 1885, i, 347–48, citing Aristoxenus, Themistius, and Proclus. The proposition as to the Good being the One seems involved in the various readings of the Gospel text, Matt. x, 17. Cp. T. Shelldon Green, *A Course of Developed Criticism*, pp. 19–21.

while men become just only by doing just actions, and temperate from performing temperate ones, "the majority of men do not do these things," but are virtuous only in theory,[1] conveys a similar hint that no amount of inquisition will avail to minimize the totality of evil tendency.

He proceeds, it is true, to seek in the POLITICS, by an inductive comparison of constitutions and their working, to discover what it is that overthrows governments and constitutions, what preserves them, what leads to good or bad administration, and what is to be selected as the ideal government. But ethic is now avowedly left behind; and of its bearing on the problems of legislation, or of their bearing on it, we get only incidental indications. Such a course of inquiry was perfectly consistent for one who felt he had done all that was to be done about ethics. Taking men as he found them, with no expectation that they would greatly change, he invited them to consider government or statesmanship or legislation as an art, a question of right and wrong or less right *methods*. The sequel is a sufficient ground for thinking that without regard to ethics there can be no permanent solution of the political problem. Yet Aristotle and the Platonic Socrates were alike committed to the conception that right action depends upon right thinking, and that inquiry might thus progressively rectify life.

No such rectification, certainly, was attained in Greece. It remains broadly true, as was urged by Hobbes,[2] that the Peloponnesian War, which determined the downward evolution of Greek polity and civilization, was grounded on the refusal of the Athenians to let the Megarians trade in their ports. Upon which Hobbes, that early free trader, points the moral that men should "allow commerce and traffic indifferently to one another," since to refuse it to any is to proclaim hatred, and in effect to declare war. No consideration of such risks of national evil had occupied the earlier Athenian philosophers, bent on formulating abstract individual Good, and in practice oblivious of the eternal need for national revision of all the usages by which good life is supposed to be secured. Nor is there to be found in Aristotle, with all his sagacity and power, any counsel by which the Greeks, had they cared to listen, could have so remade their political world as to avert the imminent Macedonian fate.

In our own day, whatever be the prospect, the immediate retrospect is not greatly different. After a century fuller of ethical discussion than any previous age, we have had the World War, of

[1] *Nic. Eth.* iv, 4.

[2] *De corpore politico*, pt. i, ch. iii, § 12.

which the initiation was confidently justified by the bulk of public opinion in Germany, where the discussion, from Kant to Wundt and Eucken, had been at least as zealous as in any other country; and where, in particular, a 'transcendental' ethic, positing 'lofty ideals,' has always been well represented. The sequel in action is quite sufficient to revive the doubt as to whether moral philosophy counts for anything in conduct—collective conduct, at least; and the doubt becomes even more pressing in the period of peace negotiations. Only a few Germans of the professional classes seem to have any sense of contrition for the enormous evil that their former State, with their applause, has wrought. The nation which had officially figured throughout the war as boasting exorbitantly of its greatness, its goodness, its Godliness, its power and its destiny, began to figure officially at the armistice as boasting of having achieved a "victory over itself"; and has since been occupied in complaining loudly of unkind treatment to a world which is perfectly aware that a contrary result of the war would have meant incomparably worse treatment of the conquered. It would appear that for peoples, and for moralists speaking on behalf of peoples, there is no moral principle, properly so-called, that counts. For if one civilized nation in mass is without any testable conception of right and wrong, it would be plainly unscientific to assume that other nations unanimously stand by one. Individuals and rulers may; but averages are obviously doubtful. No one who critically reads *The Times* can suppose that moral lawlessness is peculiar to Germany.

And yet there are grounds for thinking that even as between nations morality may be made to count, if only we face past failure, and the causes of it. The fact that in all countries a number of people with very imperfect moral qualifications show an active interest in ethics,[1] while multitudes of morally estimable people show very little interest in moral problems, is something more than an interesting paradox. Remembering our own moral imperfections, we might all see in it a promise no less than a warning. On any view, it points with a new suggestiveness to the partial truth of the Socratic assumption that character is susceptible of education. If it were only the best people who discussed ethics we might doubt it.

But if the belief is to lead to anything, it would seem that the first step to realization must be a recognition by moral philosophers

[1] Schopenhauer would generally be reckoned distinctly inferior in character, as he certainly was in philosophic temper, to Kant; but though he outwent Kant in Kant's worst mystification, he put at once a more philosophic and a more practical theory of ethics than Kant's. Spinoza, as austere in his righteousness as Kant, preluded Kant's errors. And often the least morally 'impressive' moralists are found to have the clearest vision of actual life.

that ethics should be studied with the purpose, among others, of getting improvement in collective conduct. Here we must carefully distinguish our propositions. Moral philosophers would be quite entitled to protest if it were claimed that the whole or main business of their study is to improve or guide conduct, especially if it appeared to be implied that the method urged was to be one of prescription and exhortation. Even as applied by some very earnest and conscientious ethical teachers to the instruction of the young, that method appears to be of very doubtful value; and it is not at all the method proper to ethical science properly so-called. But the end of influencing conduct may be attained in other ways. Philosophy, like action, admits of a mixture of motives without deterioration. An analogy may help to clear the issue.

If it be asked, Why do men write novels? we can get, by probing the layers of motive, a variety of answers, as thus :—

1. To make money.
2. To promote a 'reform,' public or private.
3. Because story-telling is an art perpetually attractive to both tellers and hearers.
4. Because the artist has a general view or views of life and character which he wishes to communicate.

And so, if we ask, Why do men write on ethics? we can get a similar variety of answers :—

1. To argue with other writers.
2. To direct aright the collective life.
3. Because man is an ethical and social animal, always concerned about his moral bearings and sanctions.
4. Because the problem is scientifically interesting, like geology or hydrostatics, and like them fitly to be pursued for the sake of pure scientific knowledge.

If the last answer in both cases be taken to be the best, in the sense of indicating what attitude will tend to yield the best art and the truest thought, we are still far from having really excluded a correlative purpose of influencing conduct in either case. It is all a question of means. The 'novel with a purpose' is promptly condemned as an inferior form of art; but the retort that the novel without a purpose is something worse makes its point. Would any novelist claim expressly to exclude from his work the thought of giving any cues, either negative or positive, to conduct? Would he count it a merit if it could be said of them that they threw no guiding light on life for any reader? One of the most definitely 'artistic' novelists of our time has proffered as his main moral

inference from the spectacle of life the importance of Fidelity. He certainly did not plan his novels to inculcate it. But he cannot well have missed conveying and illustrating the ideal.

As a matter of fact, indeed, some of the most influential moral philosophers of the past have been deeply concerned to guide practice, actually vitiating their systems in their preoccupation with that end. Hobbes's whole constructive effort is motived by his chagrin and alarm at the violent course of politics in his day and generation; and the scientific flaw in his philosophic scheme, the arbitrary reference of all ethic to the State as lawgiver, stands for his political expedient to stay strife. Kant's dogmatic ethic, like most of his philosophy after the CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON, is shaped by his fear that innovating reason may disrupt or unsettle society; and he in turn vitiates his philosophy by an attempt to give rational ethic a quasi-theistic sacrosanctity. And Hegel, seeing the practical inutility of Kant's abstract ethic, falls back in Hobbes's fashion on the State, to the discredit of *his* philosophy.

But we are fallen on other days, with other motives. The modern moral philosopher, as it happens, is apt to be in a different case from the free artist, inasmuch as he is generally an academic teacher. For the academic teacher is under certain restraints, which he is under temptation to represent as conditions of special elevation of scientific purpose. Wherever his subject matter *can* come in direct touch with public conduct, he is rather likely to find himself barred by considerations which may be termed prudential. If he professes political economy, can he freely criticize the policy of tariffs without being told that he is acting as a party politician? If he deals with religion, dare he tell his students plainly that the idea of 'revelation' is either a delusion or a subterfuge, and that much current religious history is simply false? And if he professes ethics, *can* he pass beyond the philosophic ground of the question, 'Why do we call certain actions right?', or 'Why are they right?', to the more practical issues, 'How far does national action conform to the ideals set forth by any ethical system?', or 'How far do most of us act up to the principles we profess?'

Let not us who are outsiders hastily pronounce that 'the fox has lost his tail'—that the academic shuns problems of conduct because he may get into trouble by handling them. He may have deeply pondered them, and honestly decided that he can do his best work by training his pupils to think accurately on the problem of the grounds of moral judgment. But let not the academic, on the other hand, too confidently claim that he sets aside the practical

issues for purely scientific reasons. There are really some grounds for doubting it.

In the first place, those sciences which do connect with practice without raising any serious difficulties in regard to current prejudices and interests, are constantly taught with some reference to practice. The academic astronomer may still see reason to guard against being reckoned 'undevout,' but he has no more scruple about indicating the bearing of astronomic facts on navigation than has the anatomist about indicating the relations of his subject to surgery. The latter might indeed get into trouble if he hinted doubts about individual immortality; and there, accordingly, we find him professionally—and quite justifiably—silent. But, now that theology has ceased to denounce the use of anæsthetics and the practice of dissection, no prejudice or interest stands in the way of getting the best practical surgery; though probably an established medical tradition obstructs the scientific study of vaccination. So with chemistry. No teacher, I believe, says that he is solely concerned with theory; on the contrary, experiment is constantly treated as the necessary accompaniment of book teaching.

Every science, obviously, has its own specialties of method; and there is, of course, no place for 'experiment' in the teaching of ethics. But has it not its analogies with the other sciences in respect of possible application to general practice? Again we are led to suggest doubts as to the academic attitude. Let us take the case of history. When Ranke was writing on the history of France, he felt it incumbent on him to pass very explicit moral judgments on French policy. When he was dealing with the seizure of Silesia by Frederick, and was in duty bound to pass a moral judgment on that, he unhesitatingly pronounced that "happily this is not the task of the historian." Let academics, German or other, say what they will, common sense (a conception to which we shall have to return) will pronounce that Ranke shirked a moral judgment in the Prussian case simply because he was a Prussian historiographer; and that his conduct here places him as a man beneath respect. A scientific standard which involved or permitted censure of Louis XIV and excluded criticism of Frederick is outside serious discussion.

Is not this episode, then, remotely or otherwise, typical of the academic course of limiting ethical instruction to the handling of the problem of the why of action to the exclusion of the what? Mr. G. E. Moore, one of the most accomplished of living experts in moral science, pronounces the former the 'fundamental' problem; and this need not be disputed. The practical question always leads

back to the other; and this makes it fundamental from the point of view of science. But if it be asked why we study ethics at all—why we seek an ethical science—we raise the question of what is fundamental in our theory of life. Do we study only in order to know? or do we desire knowledge in order to attain to good life? Or, having sought knowledge out of sheer desire to know, do we regard the possession or the use as the greater thing?

It is not without significance that that issue has been contemporaneously raised from another side, in the form of what is called Pragmatism in philosophy—the doctrine that the test of the validity of a belief is its service to life. And it should be frankly confessed that that way of raising the issue as between the theoretic and the practical handling of a problem of opinion gives the moral philosopher a new ground for his choice to treat ethics as purely an analysis of moral motivation. For Pragmatism has thus far meant, to a large extent, hand-to-mouth solutions in which the extremely difficult problems of the real effect of beliefs on conduct are quite unscientifically disposed of. It is one of the cruces of utilitarianism that social utilities, so often assumed to be always obvious and simple, are often very obscure and hard to expiscate. The moralist, then, might weightily reply that he does well to stick to his own sufficiently difficult special problem, without adding to it a hundred obscure problems in sociology, all involving special research.

But that is not the issue really raised by the appeal for a practical employment of ethical science, as distinct from Pragmatism so-called. Pragmatism, at least in some distinguished hands, is really an attempt to get behind the test of truth, and is as such to be resisted in the name of science, for which the test of truth is everything. The other appeal is made by way of giving new life and body to the conception of truth in ethics; it is, in fact, a demand for a more veridical procedure. No scientific ideal, no rigour of analysis, is sought to be relaxed; rather it is sought to make these more rigorous by bringing them to the form of particulars as well as of generalities. And, finally, to the protest that it is not the business of ethical science to make catalogues of licit and illicit actions, the answer is that what is asked is not a schedule of permissions and prohibitions at all, but an avowal of the evasiveness of the 'moral sense,' the potential delusiveness alike of empirical utilitarian tests and of à priori rules, in the medley of action.

The point may be made clearer by turning for a moment to the kindred question of the proper method and aim of the teaching of logic. There the same pædagogic issues arise. Is logic to be

taught as an aspect of epistemology—a simple analysis of thought processes in the most abstract terms possible—or is it to be a gymnastic aiming at such a development of the reasoning powers as shall fit them for the work of sound opinion-making in general?

The academic logician, faced by the same embarrassments as confront the moralist, is just as well—or as ill—entitled as he to deny that it is his business to guide opinion on current debate; that his is an analytic and not a didactic science; that he is a thinker, not a Mentor or Ready Reckoner in matters of common moral commerce. And we meet him very much as we meet the moral philosopher, with the question: "Is right reasoning decently common as yet; and do you deny that it could be made more common by making logic a training in argument on actually debated matters, living or 'burning' questions?" Admittedly, it is to some extent useful to present to the student by way of afterthought samples of Fallacy. Could not the end be better attained by making the discrimination of current and plausible fallacy a means of vivifying the whole study?

To readjust studies thus, I respectfully submit, is not to confuse the sciences with the arts, as is so often done, but to realize that, the social sciences being the proper preparation for the social arts, they should take cognizance of each other, even as do biology and hygienics. The fact that the arts, when thoughtfully practised, so often tend to claim to be sciences, is a reminder that between science and art there is no necessary difference of temper, and that their difference of immediate aim is merged in an identity of ultimate aim. Is not knowing, in short, a step in doing? The painter's first steps as student are scientific. Can he get his science without critical counsel as to his art?

While the argument, thus put, might seem to the sympathetic outsider a mere forcing of an open door, there is really a chained door, with very fair reasons for being so. What the scientific thinker is guarding against is the risk that he shall be called upon to play the director of consciences, the guide in choice of a profession or of a religion. That way social friction lies, no less than distraction of thought and purpose. And the results of some attempts of moral philosophers (as of the Pragmatists) to be 'practical' are really such as ostensibly to justify the complete exclusion of practical problems from the field of ethics.

In the laudably learned and in many ways useful MANUAL OF ETHICS by Professor J. S. Mackenzie, for instance, we have (1)

a reasoned demurrer to a treatment of ethics which makes it only a static survey,[1] but also a reaffirmation of the Aristotelian verdict that particular decisions must be left to common sense; and (2) a general treatment of ethics as "The Science of Conduct" which leaves the Art of Conduct to individual 'common sense,' as did Aristotle, after laying down the more or less universally accepted 'commandments,' and positing as the most general ethical 'end' the "realization of the rational self." It is needless at this point to enquire how this last prescription squares with the declaration that "Ethics is not concerned with a presupposed end."[2] The practical difficulty is that there is no attempt to indicate those snares and failures of the individual will-to-reciprocity which in all ages have turned to naught the current ethical prescription. And it seems to be only in bringing home to men these snares and failures, rather than in laying down (and then perforce modifying) categorical imperatives, that any hope of great moral betterment can lie.

Professor Mackenzie avows in so many words that: "The individual will is found to act constantly in contradiction with its ideal." If this is true of those who form high ideals, how much truer must it be of most of the many who hardly debate ideals at all? And if it is as true to-day as in the past that the difficulty in conduct is not to get men to accept general rules of right action, but to make them act upon them, does not the question arise whether the effective method of ethics may not be one of concentration on the problem of the anti-moral forces inherent, not in any theory of conduct, but in the nature of man?

Nothing in the history of ethics and of society is more surprising to the critical sense than the absorption of ethical writers in the matter of moral theory as distinct from moral practice. It recalls the indignation of the pedant over the other man's 'theory of irregular verbs.' Just as in the ages of the Catholic supremacy the Church is theologically merciful to crime and murderous to heresy, so in the age of revived ethical controversy it is not over war and crime and vice, but over obnoxious theories of conduct, that earnest moralists become indignant and vaticinatory. And the retrospective ethical historians see nothing incongruous in the spectacle. Professor Sidgwick, surveying very temperately the ethical situation in England in the first half of the eighteenth century, opines[3] that when, after Mandeville's FABLE OF THE BEES, men put together the

[1] *Manual of Ethics*, 2nd ed. app. B, note 1. [2] Pt. i, ch. i, § 6 (1).
[3] *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, 3rd ed. p. 192.

"quasi-theistic assumption that what is natural must be reasonable," and the conviction that unrestrained egoism is natural, "the combination of the two beliefs tended to produce beliefs which, though not perhaps practically subversive of peace, were at any rate dangerous to social welfare." Of what nature, then, was the social welfare supposed to be thus endangered by heterodox ethical speculation?

The age of Walpole was one in which that great statesman, a non-believer in Christian dogmas and a normal man of the world in his private life, kept the peace for twenty years between Protestantism and Catholicism on the Continent, and between Churchman and Dissenter at home. It was an age of growing wealth, drunkenness, crime, and disease. The drunkenness was extremely destructive of health and life, and no less productive of misery and crime. Butler became Bishop of Durham, a diocese in his day largely peopled by 'naked heathen colliers.' But what moved Butler to grave concern, and Berkeley to virulent invective and polemic, was the supposed tendency of freethinking in general, and of Mandeville's ethical paradox in particular, to 'undermine morals.'

Mandeville's ethical paradox was, in brief, that certain private vices (theologically so defined) redounded to 'public' advantage, in that greed and luxury (theologically pronounced sinful) promoted industry, wealth-seeking furthered national power, prostitution preserved the chastity of more fortunate women, and so on. The orthodox ethical comment was that such a theory encouraged vice. If it did, Milton encouraged vice much more by arguing, after Chrysippus, that evil is necessary to make good possible; and official Christianity encouraged it much more practically by promising forgiveness for all sin upon simple repentance, with a theological condition. Adam Smith, coming later, and knowing that mere smuggling automatically produced an infinity of demoralization every year among a population who read neither Mandeville nor anything else, except perhaps the Bible, allowed that probably Mandeville's book had led to no more vice than existed before, but declaimed to the effect that it had probably encouraged vice to be more impudent—a proposition in which he can hardly have believed, and to which he could not have attached much importance if he did believe it. The retrospective reflection of common sense, to say nothing of critical sense, is that the official attitude of ethics in the whole business partakes of the grotesque; and that Mandeville, by simply setting people practically thinking—as he did Johnson, to the admitted clarification of that moralist's views of life—probably

did more to clear men's heads in that generation than did Butler and Berkeley together.

Not that this relieves him, any more than any one else, from censure for false thinking. The point is that, though right thinking seems the only remedy, false thinking is not the ground evil in ethics. The ground evil is the normal supremacy of the appetites and passions and egoisms which evade the prescriptions of all ethical codes, and which in that day made Christian sects hate and persecute each other, and drinkers drink, and smugglers smuggle and murder, and rulers maintain a bad fisc at the bidding of vested interests (including that of smuggling), and theologians vituperate all who challenged their creed. Berkeley, professing a religion of love, hated the freethinkers as Burke and Nelson later hated the French, and cared neither for truth nor for good feeling in his polemic against them. All the while Butler was taking his ethical cue from Shaftesbury,[1] whom Berkeley execrated as an unbeliever and further loathed for going, notwithstanding, to church—a course prescribed to unbelievers by Berkeley himself. It thus becomes newly clear that moral contradiction inheres in personalities conscious of the highest moral purpose and practice.

The Ego being thus chronically ensnared by its self-regarding impulses, the business of practical ethics would seem to be to take very strict regard of the anti-moral no less than of the moral nature of man. And if academic ethics were really to become, as proposed by a school whom Professor Mackenzie resists, a survey on the one hand of the psychology and metaphysic of the subject, and on the other "a branch of History and Sociology," instead of having, in that case, as he puts it, "no practical bearing," it might have a much more practical bearing than any of the systems, including his own, which avowedly search for an ultimate end of action throughout the process of ascertaining the grounds of right action, and end by affirming that "good is the only reality"[2]—this by way of making ethics "stretch out its hands to metaphysics."[3]

For of all the formulas which are potentially antinomian, ostensibly capable of making men heedless of wrong-doing, that ancient and idle formula of the non-existence of evil, taken over by early Christian philosophers from pagans, and successively affirmed by pantheists of all tribes, from John Scotus and Spinoza to Hegel and Browning and Professor Mackenzie, is surely the most potentially 'dangerous.' If Evil be *non ens*, why all this pother about the

[1] Cp. Sidgwick, *Outlines*, pp. 190-93. [2] *Manual*, as cited, p. 316. [3] *Id.* p. 318.

Good? If the formula means practically nothing—which appears to be the philosophic fact—to what end do professed moralists vend it? And, vending it, on what avowable grounds can they demur to the paradoxes of Mandeville? For what can now be 'wrong'?

If we are content rather to say with Milton that evil is part of the knowable nature of things, the factor which for us connotes good, and that ethics consists in seeking good up to the point at which it might theoretically (though not possibly) disappear as a moral concept or consideration through the disappearance of moral evil, knowing that whatever we may achieve will be as much 'Nature' as anything else, we shall have settled down to the most practical of all attitudes on ethics, without in the slightest degree hampering the play of ethical theory and analysis in any direction. And if we accompany the psychology and metaphysics of the inquiry with a close study of the historical and sociological sides, we shall be doing more than has been done on any other lines to bring home to men the menace of frustration that has for ever dogged their steps.

Human life, the field of morals, is like all the rest of Nature, a scene of the play of the forces of attraction and repulsion. In the main, moralists have dwelt on the need for strengthening the attractions, often reiterating the vainest of all moral commandments: "Love one another." Professor Mackenzie seems in one passage to say that it is the one commandment which must never even momentarily be set aside.[1] It is in strict truth the one that can never be obeyed. Men may love, but never by commandment. The command to hate, so often given, is commonly obeyed with but a little help from predication. We might put it that if the repulsions be but progressively regulated, the attractions—save the one which most needs regulating—will take care of themselves. Part of the regulation will be that very recognition of the difference of the degrees in which men feel attraction, and the consent to see the minimum limit of right, not in the will to love, but in the will to live and let live. To drop the pretence of being potential angels may be the practical way of securing tolerable men, able to love.

The command to "love thy neighbour as thyself" figures in the Hebrew Scriptures as a divine precept to a people who had been represented as divinely led to massacre their neighbours for a settlement. It was doubtless a humane priest (there have always been

[1] Pt. i, ch. iv, § 9 (*b*).

such) who sought thus to countervail the religious legend without rejecting it. A people so taught could less than any be led to love by precept. In a later epoch we find current among them the question, "Who is my neighbour?"—naturally raised by men taught to see outside their own community a world of misbelievers. There is inserted in the Christian gospel (as in the case of the text in Deuteronomy, by a late interpolator) a parable in answer, to the effect that the despised alien may play the true neighbour. And how far the lesson has been learned by the pupils of the gospel may be gathered from the fact that they represent the very parable as a flight of moral vision possible only to a Superman of the race of the Pharisee and the Levite.

Certainly no better result has come of the later oracular ethic which makes morality a transcendental choice of the abstract reason, unaffected by human experience. Kant, who really grounded his ethic of reciprocity on a reasoned self-interest, thought fit to claim that it was all the while above experience. Concerned like Spinoza to show that without theological menace or promise man could be more moral than with them, he taught that the moral obligation to do right is a law of the pure reason, not to be prompted or controlled by any form of feeling; that its 'Ought' is a 'Categorical Imperative' which must be absolutely obeyed; and that the 'Ought' gives to every will the power to obey. It was all a process of substituting an ostensibly non-theological for a discredited theological ethic; an 'Ought' for a 'Thus saith the Lord' which had been detected as a priestly fiction. In a word, the fear that a removal of fictitious sanctions might demoralize conduct moved Kant to substitute an ethical for a theological fiction, even as it had moved him to frame a 'practical' pretext for a theism which his own analysis had shown to be rationally untenable. And seeing that herein he was practically overriding his own 'categorical' ethic, it might have been foreseen that there could be no real gain to conduct from such expedients. The à priori ethic of 'duty' laid down by Kant, explicitly dissociated from human sympathy, and thus left an inert form, has been the mere instrument of a Cult of the State from which international morality has been cast out. 'Who is my neighbour?' was as much a question for the people of Kant in 1914 as for the Jewry of two thousand years ago.

Kant's philosophic divagation, we may be told, came of the concern to give ethics a practical application, and is thus a warning against similar undertakings. But this is no real stop to the challenge. Precisely because he subordinated scientific truth to the

purpose of edification he was as unpractical, as impotent for real edification, as the theology he sought to supersede by transmuting its terminology. Faced by, and fully conscious of, the fact that his alleged Categorical Imperative was hardly ever obeyed, he bent his mind to heightening its impressiveness by austere rhetoric instead of facing the concrete fact of its general nullity. It is but a new version of the legend of the law-giving on Sinai, the fabrication of a Shekinah for the moral code, with metaphysical substituted for theological machinery.

After a century of official Kantism has been duly consummated by the World War, it is at least worth while to try anew the experiment of finding and telling the truth. Fear of harm to conduct from such a course becomes visibly absurd after the very fabric of civilization has been seen to reel under the regimen of theistic, Christian, Kantian, and Hegelian ethic in church and school of all belligerents alike. The sanctions of God and Christ and Duty were alike flaunted by the aggressor; the test of truth was nowhere at a lower reckoning than in his camp. The faith in truth to which Kant could not attain, or at least could not adhere, can involve no direr dangers than have overtaken and well-nigh overwhelmed the civilization of what we call Christendom. At least a fair modicum of reasonably tested verity has long been available. It is time to make it current ethical merchandise.

Let the scantiness of the general outfit, the lameness of the general practice, be really set forth—as it now is in scientific surveys of moral evolution[1]—by way of 'explanation' to men of their moral nature, and there may be some reasonable ground for expecting that that nature will evolve a little more rapidly. He who habitually realizes that he is descended from a sort of gorilla may learn—instead of protesting, with Mr. Balfour,[2] that he cannot enjoy music in the light of that conception—to be on his guard against some of his other hereditary promptings. Let the transcendental moralist put to himself this question: Has conduct in general grown better or worse since Darwin published the DESCENT OF MAN?, and he will perhaps see reason to doubt whether the transcendental ethic is the true path to moral betterment. He may indeed retort by asking whether the World War is or is not the worst of all wars—a question usefully to be put to Professor Eucken; but he will hardly find reassurance even in that direction.

[1] Notably Dr. Westermarck's *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, two vols. 1906; and L. T. Hobhouse's *Morals in Evolution*, two vols. 1906.
[2] *Foundations of Belief*, pt. i, ch. ii, end.

The World War has been only more swiftly destructive of life, not more brutal or senseless than the War of Thirty Years and the Wars of Religion in France; and the moral endorsement given to it in Germany at its monstrous outset came from the specialists of 'ideal' morality, who professed to shudder at 'materialism,' no less than from those labelled materialists. Before the war, Eucken was the cynosure of idealistic eyes in England, and won prophetic authority by empty pronouncements about man having "an infinite life through which he enjoys communion with the immensity and the truth of the universe," and by affirming that it is "only a faith in the spiritual possibilities of man" that can cope with "the moral littleness of man.....his entire subjection to natural instincts which he cannot control."[1] When the German attack on Belgium had been launched, the idealist joined hands with Haeckel, the scoffer at deity as a "gaseous vertebrate," in proclaiming a "sacred wrath" against Britain in particular for withstanding their Fatherland in its foul foray against Belgium. And that this was no mere passing hysteria of battle may be gathered from the attitude taken up by the moralist Wundt not only during the war, when he joined the German academic chorus, but in his considered treatise on ETHICS, produced more than twenty years before. It was after doing penance for the transient 'materialism' of his youth that Wundt, seeking the foundations of morality with the customary German parade of ideal motives, carefully delivered himself in regard to the ethic of militarism which for generations had dominated his country. The result, and the sequel, go far to justify the comment that German idealism gives colour to the most cynical views of human character current either in Plato's day or in ours.

First, Professor Wundt argues,[2] with all the normal German difficulty in speaking clearly, that a modern "change of view which has led to the idea of an universal commonwealth" has involved a great change in the prevailing opinion about war. He even asserts that "a total reversal of opinion has gradually come about," without giving any intelligible explanation, save such an illustration as that

> The idea of the legal commonwealth of humanity has transformed the sea [from a scene of lawlessness] into the great territory of the international commonwealth. Precisely because it is not the property of any one state, *it is taken under the protection of all seafaring nations*,[3] which are jointly responsible

[1] Eucken, *The Meaning and Value of Life*, Eng. trans. p. 77.
[2] *Ethics*, pt. iii, Eng. trans. vol. iii, pp. 290–94.
[3] The German official case throughout the War, it will be remembered, included a denial of this proposition.

> for its security. Hence, in general, the rules that govern marine warfare are *apt to be stricter and more inviolable* than is the case with the more localized warfare of the land.[1]

Concerning the Kantian ideal of 'Perpetual Peace,' the Professor goes on to deprecate a derisory attitude such as had latterly prevailed among his countrymen, noting that many of Kant's suggestions "are now recognized by the public sentiment of law, while others are looked upon as ends that are at least worth striving to attain." He even pronounces that "arbitrary breach of peace for dynastic or other egoistic interests is becoming less and less possible nowadays" (1886–92); and that though perhaps wars arising out of opposing conceptions of law or conflicting political interests may never be done with, "the same auxiliary influences that hinder aggressive war render possible a peaceful settlement of such differences." On the other hand, he is sure that "the course of historical development shows that neither an international tribunal endowed with supreme power nor a world-state such as Kant had in mind is an attainable end"; but the efficacy of arbitration, "or peaceful alliances and agreements, will increase. And the most important factor that ensures the effectiveness of such institutions of international law is *the increasing sentiment of moral responsibility for the serious consequences of a breach of peace.*"

We are to remember that the philosopher who thus expressed himself in 1892 was one of the German literati who maintained the absolute rightness of the Austro-German aggression in 1914. And we can partly understand that egregious sequence when we study the pronouncement with which he followed that last quoted:—

> War thus having become a method of solving irreconcilable conflicts in the social life of nations that is adopted only as a last resort, the means and conditions of its conduct have altered their character. *The rules of warfare have become more humane*, but this is merely an external circumstance. A more important one is the fact that, at least in the majority of civilized nations, military service is a duty so universally required that war is made a real contest of nations, where each throws into the balance its whole power, intelligence, and especially its political vitality, as expressed in its capacity for self-defence. Thus warfare is in a fair way to become a critical process in history, where the so-called fortunes of war count for less and less, and *moral preparation is almost everything.* The rule that might

[1] It is perhaps unnecessary here to point to the German official practice throughout the War.

makes right will always hold in war, but it is *destined to be amended* by another, namely, that right makes might. Perhaps it would be dreaming of another Utopia to hope that such a goal can ever be fully attained. The struggle between right and wrong will not cease while moral development lasts, for it belongs to the very essence of such development. And it is no less an inevitable characteristic of this struggle that *wrong must occasionally win.* Here, as in the legal order of the individual state, the principle holds good that, if we are to get an idea of the nature of the moral progress, we must look at the changes in men's conception of law—not at particular actions, which may or may not be in harmony with the law, and whose conflict with one another will never wholly vanish. Yet in the international commonwealth it is easier for the conception of law that is universally accepted in theory to become the maxim actually followed in conduct, *because of the comprehensive character of that social will which is represented by the power of the individual state in* such a commonwealth. For here the spirit of wrong-doing is not a power lurking in secret places, ensnaring in its toils the individual will with all the fluctuating motives which determine that will. It is an act of public violence, and hence regulations tending to prevent its occurrence may be made before the fact. These regulations will not always prove as effective as might be desired, because the commonwealth of nations lacks an organization to combine the totality of its parts into a firm system. In a measure, however, a substitute for such organization is furnished by the alliance of civilized states. It is not a social unit like the individual state, but for many purposes it produces an equivalent social order.

Thus did an immoral or 'amoral' habit of feeling distemper a scientific task, yielding contradiction upon contradiction, resistance to the proper safeguards followed by regrets for their absence, an alternation of hope and fear, promise and retractation, optimism and *real Politik*, all under a sense of the need to keep in step with the military, and be agreeable to the autocracy which settled what was sound political teaching for the universities.

I know no better illustration than this passage of the power of a dominant moral convention, the outcome of normal national self-esteem, to paralyse ethical judgment. The critic, quick to criticize every phase of moral philosophy in terms of his varying moral moods, and unable to attain to any solid standing ground for himself, sways to and fro under the contrary pressures of State doctrine and private judgment, alternately pretending that national discipline (by implication, in Germany) makes national character the determinant in war, so securing that "right makes might," and confessing that still the

wrong "must occasionally win," and that the spirit of wrongdoing can dominate the nation. And when the aggression came, more iniquitously planned and more brazenly justified than any previous aggression in modern history, the philosopher was quite sure that his roaring Fatherland was right, that its right made might, and that the antagonists were champions of wrong, duly destined to defeat.

It is hard to say which would be the more pessimistic verdict—that Wundt's moral collapse is a proof of the untruth of all human pretensions to have attained to a true spirit of justice, or that he represents the moral corruption or fundamental immorality of one nation. The circumspect Briton will shun the latter judgment. The sophism that 'right makes might,' absurdly propounded as a counter-thesis to 'might is right,' was put in British circulation long ago by Carlyle; and many consciously righteous persons among us have supposed that the two propositions were really contraries. The simple truth that right does *not* necessarily make might (though it may help), which is the true antithesis, was distasteful to them, as discouraging moral optimism. And we shall not be delivered from their snare if the comfort we take from seeing right in the end victorious in the World War should blind us to the immeasurable and irremediable evils inflicted by that war on the human beings whose sufferings are among the main illustrations of what evil is. Victory is so only for survivors.

Wundt, presumably, sees in the end of the war that triumph of wrong which he feared might occasionally happen even under the system of organized militarism. But neither was that gospel a German specialty, though Germany distanced all other States in her faith in it. We find the essence of it given forth a generation ago in England by a semi-Liberal who had no idea that he was promoting the cult of militarism. It was Walter Bagehot, a man by all accounts lovable and in many ways enlightened, who set out these doctrines in his PHYSICS AND POLITICS (1872):—

> All through the earliest times, martial merit is a token of real merit; the nation that wins is the nation that ought to win. The simple virtues of such ages mostly make a man a soldier if they make him anything. No doubt the brute force of number may be too potent even then (as so often it is afterwards); civilization may be thrown back by the conquest of many very rude men over a few less rude men. But the first elements of civilization are great military advantages; and, roughly, it is a rule of the first times that you can infer merit from conquest, and that progress is promoted by the competitive examination of constant war.

> This principle explains at once why the 'protected' regions of the world—the interior of continents like Africa, outlying islands like Australia or New Zealand—are of necessity backward.....And it explains why Western Europe was early in advance of other countries, because there the contest of races was exceedingly severe.[1]

There is hardly anything in the gospel of militarism, to say nothing of the thesis of Wundt about character giving victory, that cannot be justified from this doctrine. It has the usual mark of false thinking—self-contradiction. As Wundt hedges over right and might, Bagehot hedges over merit and conquest, making no pretence to say why an alleged moral law works only "roughly" and "in the first times." The whole theorem being only a hasty induction from a biological doctrine never subjected to either sociological or ethical checks, the historical statement is plainly and absurdly false. Australia and Africa and New Zealand were no more "protected regions" than Europe; the contest of races—or the contest of tribes of cognate race—have been as murderous and as protected there as anywhere. The short answer to the whole parade of pseudo-science is that "the first times" would have lasted forever, a scene of reciprocal slaughter, had not certain races found regions where they could live by agriculture, and so build up communities, arts, industries, sciences, polities. The rise of Rome, absurdly put in "the first times," was but a processus of organization, overcoming weaker organizations, and ultimately *destroying* the whole civilization of the Roman world, by making it incapable of self-defence against new barbarism.

False sociology of Bagehot's sort is common enough; but Bagehot has brought it into the area of ethics by his doctrine of 'merit,' on which he so lightly vacillates. The effect of the argument is to take out of the concept of merit, in the given connection, all moral meaning, and so to prepare the way for the German doctrine of *Macht* and the German practice. In this case English criticism cannot ride off on a formula of race-character; and as little can pietism ride off on a formula of religion; for though Bagehot was even heedlessly recipient of Darwinism, and was otherwise 'sceptical,' he was the life-long friend of R. H. Hutton, who was in no way scandalized by the PHYSICS AND POLITICS.

The lesson of it all would seem to be that nothing but truer

[1] *Physics and Politics*, 5th ed. p. 82. A partially similar theory, much more guarded and *pro tanto* more scientific, and free from the element of pseudo-ethic, is put by Professor F. J. Teggart in *The Processes of History*: Yale University Press, 1918. His work is criticized by the present writer in the *Sociological Review*, vol. xi, No. 1, 1919.

thinking can avert those wholesale vitiations of collective moral judgment which turned Athens into a 'tyrant city' and Germany into a 'pirate empire'; in the former case beginning the end of the downfall of ancient civilization; in the latter putting in jeopardy the whole civilization of the modern world. And 'truer thinking' seems so frail a safeguard as against elemental forces of wrong, that to posit it as such sounds hardly less vain than the Platonic dream of ruling States by sanhedrims of philosophers, falsely so called. But, anyhow, there is no other way. The 'conquest of Nature' on the side of material resources has been made solely through progressively truer thinking on matters physical. There will be no analogous conquest of Nature in respect of the control of human propensities save through an equally patient study of the far more elusive problems and forces which Socrates so naïvely supposed to be reducible to science when he dismissed the problems of physical science as insoluble.

In this matter no sane man will dream of playing Columbus or Copernicus. Those were in the main quite right who long ago declared that morality admits of no discoveries. All the fundamental maxims were found out before Confucius. What has never been attained is the art of securing their general and correlative application in a world in which even the minority who reflectively recognize them can be more or less bewildered by false reasoning, and the majorities who mostly respect them in private life can be led collectively to trample them under foot in matters international. Every one of the belligerent nations in the World War—Britain, France, the United States, Italy, Russia, as well as the Central Powers and their Allies—has even in recent generations been guilty of breach of international justice. Germany is simply the chief of sinners thus far.

Turning to the task of sweeping our own doorstep, we shall be well advised, as citizens and as aggregates, to cultivate the habit of re-thinking our ethical theories and our moral codes. That, indeed, was being done everywhere before the War; never was such a multitude of carefully-considered treatises on ethics produced as in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. One of the best in short compass, that of Dr. Georg von Gizycki, was made at Berlin.[1] Evidently the re-thinking must just be done all over again; or the best hitherto done must be sifted out and made a more common possession.

[1] *Grundzüge der Moral*: Gekrönte Preisschrift, Leipzig, 1883; Trans in Soc. Sci. Series

The critical method followed in this Primer has been chosen as the likeliest, at least in its author's hands, to promote reconsideration. Some of the ablest ethical treatises of the past generation, matchless as gymnastic for the hard student, seem unlikely to get the attention of the majority even of educated people. One feels, for instance, that the admirable ethical algebra of Mr. G. E. Moore, fascinating as it is to the student, will be simply put aside by the mass of men—artists, men of science, doctors, lawyers, politicians, men of business, and men and women of no business. They will not attempt that gymnastic. Precisely because it is about the last word in perfectly candid logical analysis, it will remain the possession of the special student.

There is just a chance, on the other hand, that another attempt to go over the ground with an eye on evolution and sociology, studying ethics as a phenomenon no less than as a science, may help a little to promote the democratization of moral culture in this country. Nothing more is hoped for from this book; and perhaps the aim may partly turn some criticism towards collaboration.

Chapter II

THE ETHICS OF OPINION

PERHAPS the best way to begin a circumspect study of ethics, which involves so much conflict of opinion, is to give deliberate heed to the lack of scruple in conflict of simple opinion, as distinct from conflicts over interests or actions as to which *moral opinions* are proclaimed. Seeing that habits of reasoning in general must affect the habits of reasoning on moral issues in particular, lax thinking on any questions of credence must tend to promote laxity in moral thinking. The two forms of aberration might thus be held to be only two sides of one fact. But it may be useful to contemplate them separately.

A broad feature of human evolution is the very gradual way in which different spheres or modes of relation are *consciously* brought within the scope even of normally accepted moral principles. Admittedly, the primary principle of reciprocity, which is in large measure valid for the most primitive human group within its own membership, is only very slowly extended beyond the group, so that international morality, being enforced by no system of law, is to our own day much less 'moral,' so to speak, than the ruling codes of conduct within the different States. A similar retardation may be said to have taken place in regard to every extension of human relations within each community.

This is only another way of saying that all human action is primarily expression of will or bias, and that 'moralization,' the regulation of will by the rights recognized as accruing to other wills, is a secondary process. In the primary relations of group life, where morality begins, reciprocity must have been pre-human. Animals in association are seen normally to respect each other's 'rights' within certain limits, group life not being otherwise possible. Man's progress is a perpetual extension of relations; and when purely mental relations are super-added to the purely active, economic, and collaborative, morality is inevitably in the rear of the advance. It proceeds upon both experience and reflection; and reflection on the mental process itself is the last to be regulated.

The immoralities (so to speak) of the intellectual life are

instinctively persistent. Men in multitudes hold as certainties many opinions either merely inculcated or expressive of personal interests, aspirations, traditions, proclivities, prejudices. A mind as scrupulous about rightness in beliefs or ideas as honest men are about financial conduct would weigh and test its notions, and abstain from professing certainty of knowledge where it finds plain reasons for doubt. It is probable, however, that the majority of men and women are not yet conscious of any 'ethic' in purely intellectual matters at all; at least, their ethic is here strictly comparable to that of early tribal custom. Most of their cherished beliefs originate as simple desire to believe, and to this desire all tests of truth are subordinated. At best, they treat opinions as tastes, not to be reasoned about, but to be 'respected' as idiosyncrasies; and their own opinions are formed by the chances of bias and training. Where they hold their beliefs passionately, on the other hand, they feel in regard to them as they do in regard to 'property'—a man's beliefs being, in fact, physically 'proper' or personal to him, and thus really analogous to possessions. This being so, the ethics at work in conflicts of opinion is naturally in large measure primitively unscrupulous, simply because it is primitively unguided by self-criticism. Men argue for their interests, their accepted beliefs, their traditions, and their prejudices, with but a scanty regard for the law of consistency, which is in intellectual matters at once the law of rectitude and the analogue of the rule of reciprocity in conduct.

A simple case will illustrate the proclivity. When, in the last century, liberal men began to ask for an application to contemporary life in Britain of the Christian maxim that 'the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,' they were met, by men who professed obedience to gospel doctrine, with an indignant reference to the fourth commandment as a divine law of absolute and permanent obligation on all Christians. Here was a case where, the given law being archaic (to say nothing of its being simply a pre-Mosaic Mesopotamian 'taboo'), the principle of utility was necessarily to be appealed to for a reasonable settlement. Utility, in terms of the gospel precept, so plainly weighed in favour of making Sunday a day of reasonable recreation in Britain as in other European countries, Protestant and Catholic alike, that the very champions of the commandment speedily shifted their ground, and maintained that the observance of one day in seven as a day of absolute rest was highly useful, and ought to be legally enforced on that ground. This was an arguable position; but it was flatly

inconsistent with that previously taken up by the same people. Probably none of them, however, had any sense of divergence from honesty in making the change of ground.

In the same fashion, marriage with a deceased wife's sister was long fiercely resisted by churchmen, on the ground of a text in the Pentateuch, which certainly did *not* veto the practice,[1] though all the while some of the most explicit texts in the same code, bearing on analogous relationships, were treated by the same churchmen as absolutely immoral for the present day, like the divinely sanctioned polygamy and concubinage of the Patriarchs. 'The sophist within,' the 'amoral' will to maintain a traditional position, in such cases simply plays the part of the primeval strong man, disregarding moral codes.

The dialectic phrase *tu quoque* expresses the general recognition of the law of consistency by men who resent its breach by others. But, as the phrase suggests, men often argue for victory very much as they fight for victory in a law suit, to say nothing of war. Much of philosophy has been a procedure of casting doubt on ordinary intuitive beliefs, not with a concern to reach their rectification, but in order to set up a quasi-defence for other cherished beliefs seen to be in danger of rejection by inquisitive 'common sense.' Finally, the endangered belief is not really defended at all; all that has happened is an attack on a belief supposed by the critics of the other to be incontestable. But a similar counter-argument is merely ignored. Thus the Berkeleyan philosophy sought by impugning the ordinarily accepted 'facts' of consciousness, the belief in 'external reality,' to undermine criticism of theistic theory and dogma; and its method is still in religious use. But many of those who rely on that method, when challenged to recognize causation in will, are commonly given to meeting the challenge by the blank affirmation: 'We *know* that our will is free.' When a similar affirmation is offered as a rebuttal of their thesis as to sense impressions, they contemn it as unphilosophic dogmatism; yet it is their own confident expedient on the other issue. In the same fashion, men even of philosophic pretensions will alternately meet ordinary objections to theism on the score of the violence it does to moral feelings by a quasi-ratiocinative argument as to the need for recognizing difference between infinite and finite relations, and ground their own creed on 'facts of experience,' their comfort in belief being put as its vindication. Thus consistency and reciprocity are alike flouted.

[1] Lev. xviii. 18.

And this happens because the defenders, like most other men, cling to their habits of belief, passionally resenting alike criticism and counter-assertion. In matters of religion this has meant in the past not only savage and protracted civil strife and frightfully prolonged wars such as the War of Thirty Years, but an infinity of murderous persecution. Often, indeed, questions of revenue, of property, were bound up with those of opinion, much of the heresy-hunting carried on by the Papacy in the Middle Ages being motived by risk of loss of ecclesiastical income. But this all goes to illustrate further the conditioning even of religious opinion by non-moral 'interest.' Every opinion as aforesaid tends to become a 'property,' a part of one's self, and to be fought for as an interest, in disregard of any higher law of truth.

This is the explanation of a position which has long been common in religious apologetics, and which indeed could not now be ventured on in any other field—the position, namely, that all historical or other criticism of the claims of the Christian religion is countervailed by an appeal to what are called 'the facts of Christian experience.' The meaning is that the believer has enjoyed and consciously profited by his belief, and that this is what really matters, the question of either the historic truth or the moral justice of the creed being in comparison negligible. It happens, to begin with, that this position is often taken up by men who in matters of ethical theory warmly vituperate the idea that 'pleasure' can be a criterion or end of conduct. And it will be contended by some, perhaps, that those who do profess the pleasure-standard are bound to concede this position to the religionist. If his religion makes him happy, what other criterion can condemn it from the point of view in question? But no ethical school save this Christian one had ever maintained that a belief as to alleged historical facts and alleged revelations is to be tried by the standard of the pleasure it yields. The diverging ethical schools had agreed to a presumed universal law of veridical statement: it is in the name of religion and its special ethic that such a law is negated.

At this point two comments may suffice. The first is that the flouting of the test of truth in the interest of a cherished experience is finally a suicidal expedient on the side of dialectic. The alleged 'experience' is declared to be that of one who 'believes'; and the question is whether he is to go on 'believing' when he no longer has any ground for 'belief' truly so-called. In the terms of the case, the alleged experience has ceased. And that is not all. The proposition as to 'experience' is an allegation that certain things

have actually happened to the believer. But in this case the believer has been refusing to admit that historical fact is of intellectual importance. What value, then, can be attached to any statement by him as to what happened to him or any one else? He takes his stand on purely egoistic ground, declaring that all that counts for him is his own series of sensations. But this test is equally good as against him; and he, in the terms of the case, has no right to expect to be believed. If he *has* had a given experience, indeed, what on his own principles does it matter?

A conscientious use of the criterion of experience, further, would involve an attempt to estimate (1) the total or aggregate experience, not merely the alleged subjective experience of one set of 'believers'; and (2) the reactions in experience of a profession of 'belief' doubled with the avowal that in the 'believer's' opinion it does not matter whether what he 'believes' is true. Granting that he was blest while he really believed, what is his moral experience when he in effect argues that he is entitled to believe whatever doctrine makes him happy? *That* is not a position of belief at all: belief cannot exist on such a footing. And if it be next argued that the loss of happiness affirmed to follow upon loss of belief ought to deter every one from arguing against another's belief, the answer is again that such a position is barred to the adherents of a religion which avowedly seeks to overthrow all beliefs opposed to it, and actually does this, in the case of backward races, with very serious effects on stability of life, both moral and physical.

At all points of the dispute the fact would seem to be that men fight for their mental habit as they do for their bodily interest; with this difference for the worse (so to speak), that there is no code of intellectual law of which the judgments can be enforced as legal judgments may be and are in lawsuits. In the very nature of the case there can be no enforcement. Even law cannot make a man honest, though it may compel him to make amends; and still more impossible is it to make a man intellectually honest by pressure. Either he is enlightened by debate or he is not. And where there is no such pressure on assent as is made by the facts of things in regard to matters of science and physical action most men, probably, 'believe' on the promptings of inclination.

A truth-seeking ethical science, then, has to fight first and foremost with forces of egoism which defy not only the primary social rule of reciprocity but all the rules by which general truth of any kind is to be discovered. When the stage of theological murder is passed, the determination of opinion by tradition and prejudice

remains the normal condition of belief in general. But it is not merely traditional opinion that ignores intellectual ethic. Innovating opinion also is primarily the expression of a bias; and it is only where bias is loyally submitted to every fair test of evidence and argument that enduring truth is reached or an intellectually ethical habit of mind is set up. Among liberal thinkers 'the sophist within' may operate alike by way of arbitrary innovation and of wilful adherence to halfway positions, refusing to carry critical thought beyond a fairly easy march.

The best discipline in this regard has undoubtedly been supplied by the natural sciences, which, in their modern development, greatly expand the field of realistic reasoning first systematically opened up by mathematics. The effects of mathematical discipline, no less than those of daily practical debate in the dikasteries, are visible in the relatively high development given to the moral reason in ancient Greek literature as compared with anything so far achieved by Jews. Yet they were not enough to establish a general intellectual scrupulosity in the handling of most of the natural sciences; and philosophic self-will was thus left large scope through the whole epoch of antiquity. Astronomy, in the hands of mathematically trained specialists, was most successfully explored; and it was on that basis that modern science began its constructions.

Each new exploration has meant, *pro tanto*, an application or evocation of intellectual ethic. Where pre-scientific opinion was more or less lawless and its conflicts a matter of self-will, strictly objective science was progressively committed more and more to absolute veracity. There every divergence from truth of observation or inference normally involves (save as regards the speculative processes which outgo evidence) some practical breakdown, or leaves a more or less obvious hiatus between formula and facts, not to be concealed by scientific terminology after the fashion of that of metaphysics. Thus the general receptiveness to truth and concern for veracity have been more promoted by the mere cultivation of 'material' knowledge in a few centuries than by whole ages of theological and philosophical exposition of supposed truths claimed to be of a higher order.

Ethics having from the first been subject to the latter kind of handling, it is among the last of the sciences to be open to the rigour of observation and logic which in the physical sciences is peremptory. Perhaps, indeed, no science is harder to reduce to precision of statement. The oldest, most elementary, and most widely accepted of moral principles—the one moral principle, indeed,

which can be regarded as quasi-universal—is the rule of reciprocity; and this obviously holds strictly valid only for the direct or immediate relations of equals and friends. It gives little or no guidance for the more indirect relations. It suspends itself when men go to war, or are wilfully wronged, or feel themselves to be maliciously criticized; it is practically annulled by some of the earliest of domestic institutions, as slavery; and it would be idle to pretend that it can operate as completely between master and servant as between friends on an equality. The spheres of completely or actively moral relation between men in society, then, have always been more or less restricted.

It is one of the most paradoxical aspects of moral evolution that reciprocity is most general and crime most rare in conditions of the greatest intellectual poverty. An Eskimo community, living on the verge of the physically possible, is thus, apart from its infanticide, a more 'innocent'[1] aggregate than the most highly civilized State. But in other and hardly less primitive groups it is found that the law of reciprocity is at some points very imperfectly operative; and the lot of women in particular becomes one of degradation and utter servitude, with far less of joy in living than is attained among the primitives of the Arctic Circle. Such being the aspect of life even where 'the greatest good of the greatest number' is least overruled by individual or class egoism, the science of ethics, so-called, has had to grow up among men of whom the most considerate have been more or less conscious of a vast incongruity between theory and practice. Thus they have often tended to be evasive of facts in their theories and evasive of theory in their practice.

We shall find many illustrations of this in our scanning of the evolution of morals. Aristotle, for instance, found himself faced by the institution of slavery in his own State; and, with his rare powers of comprehension and penetration, could not but see how, like inequality in general, it sapped and weakened the social fabric, as we call it. But, being dependent like all his class on the usage of slavery for his way of life, he sought, without any candid avowal of a dilemma, heterogeneous arguments to defend the institution.

In the same fashion, slavery in Christendom was tacitly accepted by most moralists down to the latter part of the eighteenth century, though there were a number of pronouncements against it by both theological and non-theological writers. The theory and practice of enslavement as maintained by the Spaniards in the New World,

[1] As regards harsh competition, theft, and malice in general. On the sexual side there is much licence. See Elie Reclus, *Primitive Folk*.

and promoted by Protestant England, were alike denied and denounced by a series of Spanish theologians and ecclesiastics, of whom Las Casas is the most renowned.[1] In England, Hobbes directly countered the position of Aristotle, and denied that a man could rightly be enslaved save by his own consent.[2] But the plans of Las Casas to save the natives of the New World led to the new commercial development of negro slavery; the Spanish Government, which had supported Las Casas by way of controlling its settlers, allowed the new slavery to take root; and England, whose Elizabethan explorers had helped to build it up, took her share in it as a matter of course in the Treaty of Utrecht. Thus, though English law repudiated all slavery, English commerce partly throve on it; and ethical doctrine was impotent to put it down, the first great impulse to its abolition coming from the enthusiasts of the French Revolution. In the United States a theological ethic backed slavery in the Slave States as spontaneously as theological prejudice there and elsewhere maintained all the primitive delusions of Biblical cosmology against modern science, down to Darwin.

It is thus on its intellectual side that average morality is still most backward. In the moral relations of equals, reciprocity is not merely accepted as a duty but practised as a pleasure; and in respect of commerce and property, honesty is commonly observed. In matters of opinion in general a high scrupulosity alike in credence and in controversy is practised only by the few; and while ethical controversy has latterly come to be conducted by experts with a high degree of candour as regards the abstract aspects of the science, the average man still proceeds with conduct and with arguments about conduct on lines of prejudice and habit. As regards international relations it is quite unnecessary to labour the point. The bulk of the educated class of a highly educated nation is recognized by those of most other nations to have applauded a vast crime committed by its own State; and large sections of the educated classes of the other States in turn have at times acquiesced in deeds by their own Governments which, to the eyes of other peoples at the time, were outrages, albeit on a smaller scale. A general admission to the same effect has in the past been common ground for serious moralists, and the point need not be argued now. Suffice it to note that the collective immoralities of aggregates tell of a

[1] See Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, pt. ii, ch. iv, §§ 87–92; Helps, *Spanish Conquest in America*, bk. xx, ch. ii. The protest by a handful of Spanish ecclesiastics against the national crimes wrought in the New World ought to be noted in the history of ethics.

[2] *De Corpore politico*, pt. i, ch. iv, §§ 1–11.

still very imperfect evolution of the 'moral sense' among the most civilized peoples.

An instance which should be conclusive for the candid student may be taken from the political life of our own country. It is constantly taken for granted, by all political parties, that no Government can be trusted to administer justly without the constant criticism of its Opposition, daily exercised through the machinery of Parliamentary questions. The principle is accepted (or was, down till the other day) alike in theory and practice, though the rulers are of one blood with the ruled. Yet, where British government is exercised over backward countries or races with no such safeguard, it is constantly taken for granted by the great mass of the leading parties that no such safeguard is required; that Britons ruling over aliens of different creed, colour, and social ideals, administer with absolute rectitude; and that any charge to the contrary is 'seditious' or malicious, and is to be dismissed on a bare official voucher. It is quite clear that one or other assumption must be false; yet both are made by the same men. Political ethic in our own country is thus far from decent consistency.

The circumspect student who realizes so much will then be on his guard against confidence in the justice of his untested judgments, whether of the strictly moral type, as on questions of rightness, justice, and so on—or psychological, as questions of the nature and validity of conscience, the conception of duty, or the discrimination between self-interest and altruism, or the ever-recurring problem set up by the term 'Free Will.' It is hard enough to reach consistent science with the most anxious concern for veracity: without a predominance of such concern over bias and prejudice it can never be reached at all.

It is not indeed to be maintained that intellectual ethic calls for a laborious inquisition by each of us as to the validity of every one of his unstressed opinions. Such a research would be the analogue of the valetudinarian attitude on diet, which tends to make life burdensome and querulous. Many opinions will always be held lightly 'for what they are worth.' But as regards the opinions by which men gravely praise and blame, and weigh life and character, and ostracize and legislate, a concern for rightness of thought is as incumbent as concern for rectitude in any other relation. The attempt of a distinguished thinker in our time to vindicate a 'Will to Believe' where evidence is lacking, ended in a modification of the titular formula, a protest that it had been misunderstood, and a virtual avowal that the propagandist's motive had been resentment

of the confidently agnostic attitude on religion and a determination to back the side of the superior pietist as against the inferior unbeliever.[1]

Such a procedure is too transparent to need criticism. But the snare of presupposition, the predilection to a creed, a doctrine, an opinion, a theory of things, can operate, apparently, without our consciousness, even when it is our special business to be on our guard against such partiality. A notable instance is the recent undertaking[2] of a Professor of Philosophy, specially concerned with ethics, to show that aggressive militarism in general, and German militarism in particular, are to be traced to the vogue of 'materialist' philosophy and its opposition to the 'idealism' of Kant and Hegel, which is certificated as preservative against such proclivities. The thesis is motived, or provoked, by the absurd counter-thesis that German political demoralization has been the result of 'German Philosophy' in general, speculative philosophy and 'the higher criticism' being specially indicated. But the defence here becomes as irrational as the attack; and the motivation appears in both cases to be the same—the gratification of an animus without any scrupulous regard to evidence.

The first thesis might have been sufficiently repelled by asking whether the militarism of eighteenth-century Prussia, or that of Louis XIV, or that of Napoleon, or, indeed, that of Bismarck, had anything to do with 'speculation' or the higher criticism. Such a pretence discredits its framers by revealing at once its subjective basis. But when the Professor, instead of applying the simple historic test, goes about to show that Kant and Fichte and Hegel would never have countenanced the policy of *Weltmacht*, and that the materialism or anti-Hegelianism of Schopenhauer and Moleschott and Feuerbach and Büchner and Haeckel alike progressively tended to a worship of brute force and a contempt for international ethics, he puts himself morally and philosophically in line with the assailants.

The historic test dismisses both deductions alike. Militarism and aggression, obviously, have flourished most extensively in ages when most men never troubled themselves about philosophical or ethical theory; and they were equally countenanced by all manner of religious conceptions. Babylon and Assyria left nothing undone to substitute Might for Right; Alexander had no stimulus from

[1] See note on p. 99 of *Selected Papers on Philosophy*, by William James (in 'Every Man' series).

[2] *German Philosophy in Relation to the War* (1915), by Prof. J. H. Muirhead, author of *Elements of Ethics*.

materialism; Rome had established a cult of aggression long before the advent of Cæsar; and Attila exceeded Cæsar in range of conquest without any knowledge of Cæsar's opinions. The spectacle and the methods of Spanish conquest in the new world; and the records of religious warfare and massacre in Hussite Bohemia; in the Crusades, whether against Albigensian heretics or Saracen Moslems; in Catholic France in the sixteenth century; and in Germany throughout the war of Thirty Years, might have sufficed to cancel any hypothesis which ascribes either the lust of conquest or barbarity in its pursuit to a lack of belief in the Divine Government of the Universe. In Britain, in particular, a glance at the careers of the first and third Edwards and of Henry V might deter any thinker from ascribing the pursuit of foreign conquest to materialistic conceptions in philosophy.

But even if the historic test be left out of account, as not imposing itself on a philosopher, the special thesis of Professor Muirhead is negatived by the very data on which he proceeded. Had he, in the first place, looked candidly to the facts of the case in Germany, he would have noted that Eucken, who shares his own 'idealist' aversion from every flavour of 'materialism,' was, if possible, even more furiously chauvinistic than Haeckel in 1914 and later. Had he been concerned to deal justly as between the hypothetical moral tendencies of diverging philosophies, he would have noted that Hegel, his own philosopher-in-chief, did what neither Schopenhauer nor Feuerbach nor Moleschott nor Büchner nor Haeckel ever did—in cold blood vindicated war in general as a moral medicine for States.[1] To infer thence that Hegel would certainly have stood with Eucken and Haeckel in 1914 had he lived, or that his philosophy was the main factor in promoting German militarism, would plainly be uncandid: we have no right to any clear inference in the matter, though we have strong ground for suspicion. But we should have *prima facie* a much better right to hold these views than to suppose that Schopenhauer or Feuerbach would, or that Büchner did, approve of Bismarckism, or that any of them would have contemplated with complacency the hideous attack on Belgium.

Neither in Feuerbach nor in Schopenhauer can any reader pretend to find any hint of a leaning to the spirit of conquest, or to any militarist ideal. To suggest that their philosophic bias would lead to such proclivities in others is, once more, to flout the historic

[1] See Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, § 324, and Add. (Eng. trans. pp. 330–33)

test, and further to challenge an inquiry as to what semblance of psychological basis can be given for the innuendo. Christian zeal actually did inspire Peter the Hermit and sustain the Crusades; and here the psychic procedure is obvious enough. But how should the *Weltanschauung* of Schopenhauer, the anti-materialist pessimist, or of Büchner and Moleschott and Haeckel, the so-called materialists, predispose their readers to a faith in militarism or a love of war?

A student of philosophy, in particular, might be expected further to ask himself the question: If philosophic opinions are at all decisive factors in shaping the political courses of nations (which seems rather improbable, regard being had to the cultural position of most monarchs, conquerors, and statesmen), what are the determining factors in the formation of philosophical opinions? And this would entail the further question: How came it that Feuerbach and Moleschott developed their views on the basis of Hegel, whom both of them devoutly studied in youth, as did Marx, the founder of 'historic materialism' so called? If we say that their philosophy promoted militarism (*post hoc ergo propter hoc*), must we not say that the study of Hegel promoted their philosophy; and similarly that the study of Kant promoted the pessimism of Schopenhauer, which is supposed by the British Professor to have promoted Prussianism, as against the philosophy of Hegel, which glorified the Prussian State?

The logical outcome of the position, it will be seen, is the notion that all good historical evolution is more or less the result of good abstract philosophy, and all bad historical evolution the result of bad abstract philosophy; and that good philosophy and bad philosophy are alike to be assigned to innate goodness and badness in the philosophers, the bad philosophers having a 'double dose of original sin,' for which they are personally responsible. It is thus possible for moral philosophy, under the control of mere academic animus, to end in the negation not merely of philosophy but of common sense. Both, at least, seem committed to recognizing that a pretence of tracing causation in human affairs calls for some theory of the causation of bad philosophy past the producer.

Such a miscarriage alike of ethical and of philosophic method is to be explained only in terms of the potency of egoistic bias. The critic who imputes such a bias to the philosophies he rejects is but obtruding his own when he seeks to discredit them by such arguments as we have been considering. The proclivity is seen in its primary form in the prejudice of race or tribe; in its secondary form in the prejudice of cult or creed; and in its widest cultural

form in the readiness to impute either personal depravity to the holders or a depraving tendency to the holding of opinions which we dislike, even when such opinions are irrelevant to the conduct imputed.

When such unethical survivals can affect teaching as we have seen in university chairs in England, to say nothing of the spectacle of moral subversion presented by the academic class in Germany during the War, it is plainly very necessary for all of us to take heed to the ethic of our opinions. The primary immoralism which imputes wickedness to the opponents of our cherished beliefs can be seen to survive in an attenuated form among men who would be ashamed to ascribe depravity to antagonists without good evidence. It exhibited itself, for instance, in the use made by certain persons of Darwin's wistful confession that in old age he had ceased to enjoy Shakespeare, or poetry, or music.[1] He spoke of this "curious and lamentable loss of the higher æsthetic tastes," puzzled over it, and speculated as to the moral injury it might have done him. And the persons referred to undertook to explain that it was the fatal tendency of his general view of things and his special scientific habits to lead to such æsthetic degeneration.

They were exactly as wrong as they were malicious. Moleschott and Büchner—who for our Hegelian Professor are much more reprehensible than Darwin—remained to the last adorers of Shakespeare; and Moleschott, who had a singularly catholic love of *belles-lettres*, was as enthusiastic in his old age about Dante as about Shakespeare.[2] It should be added that both were entirely devoid of Chauvinism, both full of good-will to France and England, and both averse from Bismarckism. The atrophy of the higher æsthetic tastes in Darwin in his later years had nothing whatever to do with either his theories or his special scientific practice; and similar atrophy has taken place, either through physical decay or preoccupation, in men of entirely opposite opinions and wholly divergent occupations.

It is difficult to contemplate such critical fanaticism without some return towards a pessimistic estimate of the ethical prospects of mankind. Egoistic malice in matters of opinion appears to survive unimpaired the veto put upon the *ultima ratio* of religious persecution; and when the negation of critical justice is gone about in the name of philosophy it seems vain to rely on cultural processes for any great ethical betterment, as distinct from the elimination

[1] *Autobiography*, in *Life and Letters*, i, 100–102.
[2] See Moleschott's *Für meine Freunde: Lebens-Errinerungen*, 1874, per index.

of physical force. But it must be that or nothing. To produce the moral betterment, in any case, there is clearly needed a quickening of what passes for moral instinct by the culture of judgment; and this alone is a sufficient practical plea for anything in the nature of a new approach to the general ethical problem. If there should be special resistance from those who habitually proclaim the loftiness of their ethical inspiration, it will be but a reason the more for doubting whether betterment can ever come by way of the self-adoring intuitions which in one age made a set of godly absolutists lust to "hew Agag in pieces before the Lord"; in another set men on reviling alike the instinct of sex and the spirit of reason, and from era to era have generated crusades, massacres, tortures and savageries past counting. The deists of the French Revolution, with their à priori certainties, matched the deeds of their Catholic ancestors of the day of St. Bartholomew; and 'realistic' Bolsheviks in Russia in turn have emulated them. French soldiers, whose ideal is chivalry, have smoked Arabs to death in caves in Algeria; Britons who helped to burn Boerland bare in an evil quarrel have lived to execrate the devastation of France and Flanders; and pupils of Wundt and Eucken have collaborated in the bestial rape of Belgium. No variation in theory can well sink us deeper than that. Perchance one or another may tend to help us out.

Chapter III

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF TERMS

No science, perhaps, has suffered more than ethics from laxness of terminology. As in the case of economics, the science has had to be built up round terms of every-day use and extremely variable significance; and the very effort to define them sets up new risks of misconception, since it involves, as a rule, either a narrowing or a widening of common meanings. In economics, 'rent' and 'capital' are cases in point. While, however, there has been a large measure of success in the framing of an economic terminology, the delicate character of ethical problems has led rather to an evasion than a facing of the difficulty. Precisely because conduct was a matter about which most men always felt more than they thought, their terminology there has remained primitively simple. The indigence of early language is revealed in the multi-significance of the term 'right' in many European languages. With us it is noun, adjective, verb, and adverb, and all its meanings convey a commentary on its special ethical sense. The adjective means straight, accurate, correct, fit, true, just, direct, etc.; the adverb = quite or thoroughly, truly, justly, accurately, fitly, or according to plan or purpose; the verb, to remedy wrong, to restore balance or position; and the noun stands alike for justice, legal claim, and moral claim. Further, the word in English, French, and German signifies position relatively to the body, a complication absent from Greek and Latin.

In French, *droit* adds to some of these senses that of law in general; and so in German—a state of things intellectually primitive all round, so to speak.

With 'moral' there is the same ambiguity. In Latin, *moralis* is an adjective framed by Cicero from *mos* (pl. *mores*), which meant personal will, idiosyncrasy, caprice, habit, conduct, usage; and the noun plural signified what in English used to be conveyed by 'manners'—the *ways*, customs, usages, of a community. It is to be noted that the modern word emerges on a line of thought distinct from the specification of law (Lat. *jus*) or legal justice (*justitia*), as if there were gradually emerging a problem felt to transcend early

social law. Cicero's term (= pertaining to *mores*) was comparatively scientific; but our form of it, derived through the French, has acquired ambiguities like those of 'right,' though its development in English as in Latin is late.

In Shakespeare, the adjective 'moral' is rare; and the noun, which is more frequent, stands (as in the phrase 'to point a moral') for purport, lesson, or 'point.' 'Morality' he uses only once; and 'immoral' and 'immorality' never at all. These words were, in fact, rare in English in his day, *moralitas* having been only of late creation in Latin literature; while the negatives do not exist in classic Latin at all. Yet the *ideas*, we are to remember, were certainly current in terms of names for the various forms of ill-doing.

The main meanings of 'moral,' as adjective, are: (1) pertaining to conduct (as 'moral law,' 'moral science'); (2) mental as distinguished from physical (as in 'moral courage,' 'a moral victory'); and (3) 'right,' or conscientious, or scrupulous.

'Ethics' and 'ethical,' coming late into general English use, might have saved the situation, had they been scientifically fixed, though the Greek *ethos* (=character) substantially equates with the Latin *mos*. 'Ethics,' since Aristotle, has the advantage of signifying only 'body of ideas on morals'; but 'ethical' has come to mean often 'right,' like 'moral'; and though the suggestion conveyed of 'deliberately decided' (as to conduct) helps to keep a scientific force for the term, it does not strictly square with such a use as 'an ethical blunder.'

To guard against miscarriage of meaning, then, in regard to these and other terms, it seems advisable to premise, for those who may care to consider it, a set of brief discussions which may serve to indicate the need for scrutiny of their implications and the senses in which they are used hereinafter. The preliminary discussion, it is believed, may avert the need for a great deal of incidental discussion at later stages.

A priori.—The primary meaning 'from before,' 'from a prior position or conception,' yields the conception of 'truth perceived independently of experience' (even if admittedly perceived only at a certain stage of experience). This conception comes in practice to be applied alike to what are called *necessary truths* (that is, propositions essential to all reasoning or inevitably following from undisputed premisses) and what are called *intuitions*. These, however, seem to be quite different orders of idea. I cannot know from experience that there is no limit to space; but I perceive by

reflection that the idea of a limit is a contradiction of itself, since any obstacle is either continuous or not continuous, and either way *extension* is posited. This may be termed sound à priori reasoning, as against à posteriori (about which there is no difficulty). And so with geometrical reasoning. It all proceeds upon or out of experience; but the truth finally accepted is not *given* or *proved* by experience.

On the other hand, the à priori argument for the existence of 'a personal God,' Creator, Upholder, and Controller of the Cosmos, while reached on ostensibly similar lines, has no philosophical validity. It was framed, to begin with, by men who never attempted to think logically about space at all; and it remains in itself a tissue of logical contradictions, being a projection, in terms of infinity, of the strictly and essentially finite conception of Person. The fact that I cannot conceive 'infinity' is no disqualification of my belief in infinite space, for that involves no self-contradiction, and is really a removal of old contradictions; on the other hand, no God-idea removes the contradictions implicit in the old idea; and the attempts to do so by such predicates as 'infinitely good,' 'infinitely wise,' omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, do but set up new contradictions. This concept, therefore, is 'inconceivable' in quite a different sense from that in which infinite extension or series is inconceivable. It is therefore not acceptable as an à priori truth, however confidently men may think they reach it by far more careful reasoning. Other men, by necessary reasoning, are led to reject it, and to conclude that what the God-idea seeks to do is outside of the range of human thought. In ethics, again, 'à priori' is commonly applied to a state of mind or a belief supposed to be primordial, or prior to reason, in the sense of being its own 'justification,' like the knowledge of pain, pleasure, heat, cold, perception by touch, and so on. And it is quite true that a man's sense of *his* 'right,' *his* 'wrong' (or injury), *his* right to take revenge, is thus primordial. But, as we shall see, *these* 'à priori' convictions, though they may be found to remain in some measure valid, are no more *necessarily* valid than early man's conviction that wind is made by the blowing of a supernatural or superhuman Person, or the nearly universal conviction of savages that all disease and death are wrought by or through evil spirits. The sense of the 'rightness' or fitness of revenge, it is true, is the more primordial, rooting as it does in pure animal instinct; but precisely here, where the à priori is, as it were, most absolute, ethical reflection sets up the conviction that often, for the thinking man,

the felt 'right' is 'wrong'—that is to say, can be shown to the reflecting mind to be wrong because injurious.

The common belief of savages as to the dangers attaching to the use of names is as purely à priori as their belief that a particularly large or powerful animal is tenanted by the spirit of some departed human hero. A hundred such à priori beliefs are seen by civilized men to be hallucinations.

There is thus no conclusive or certificating force whatever in the term as descriptively applied to a belief. It does not even set up a true psychological discrimination. The savage holds his conviction of the obligation to revenge just as he holds his conviction of the wickedness of breach of a taboo in marriage or in the use of a name—a conviction not truly instinctive, being reached by a process of à priori reasoning, but just as absolute in his moral code. He can be taught to believe that the resort to revenge is wrong, just as he can be taught to dismiss taboos. What (if anything) is ethically 'right' in an à priori conviction is to be settled by a process of ethical reasoning, if one is to have any reasoned ethic at all; just as what (if anything) is right in an à priori belief about the causation of wind is to be settled only by critical reasoning.

The term à priori, in fine, can describe (1) a conviction reached only by reasoning, ousting a more spontaneous or more à priori error; (2) an entirely absurd guess; and (3) a spontaneous, intuitive, instinctive feeling or conviction of the rightness of revenge, primordial in consciousness, which is yet demonstrably to be overruled, on rational grounds, as leading to much evil, both to society in general and to the revenger himself. All three senses of the term are legitimate, though it would be a gain to set up a substitute for one or other. The important point is that in neither sense does the term certificate a conviction as either factually true or morally valid. À priori thinking may be either deliberate reasoning, which may be either sound or unsound, and which only critical reasoning can validate, or intuitive knowledge or feeling, which also may be either irreducibly true or irreducibly just, or may again be reducible on scrutiny to evil (however common) animal bias. Scrutiny there must always be, if we are to care for the true as we profess to care for the right, the good.

Conscience.—It is still common to assume that by this word is signified a special mental faculty, distinct from moral judgment. This view arises from the fact that the term is associated with either a process of moral hesitation or a retrospective self-judgment.

But, "in any intelligible or tenable sense of the term, conscience stands simply for the aggregate of our moral opinions reinforced by the moral sanction of self-approbation or self-disapprobation" (Fowler, *Progressive Morality*, p. 39). 'Conscientious' thus means simply 'moral' in the sense of 'concerned to do right'; and any ascription of 'infallibility' or 'supremacy' to 'conscience' is an irrelevant use of terms, save in so far as 'supremacy' means the recognition of 'duty' to do what is believed to be right as against any counter-motive or pressure.

The writer above quoted rightly insists that 'conscience,' being the very variously enlightened sum of any individual's moral ideas, cannot be pronounced 'infallible.' Yet he also says: "That we ought to act in accordance with [our moral] opinions, and that we are acting wrongly if we act in opposition to them, is a truism. 'Follow Conscience' is the only safe guide, when the moment of action has arrived." And yet again, in the next sentence, he pronounces: "But it is equally important to insist on the fallibility of conscience, and to urge men by all means in their power to be *constantly improving and instructing their consciences*."

It will at once be admitted that where we are constantly instructing we are not 'following,' but guiding. But the complete criticism of the passage is that the distinction drawn between men and their consciences is, in the terms of the prior definition, fallacious. We *are* our consciences. The precept should therefore run: "To be constantly (or frequently) checking alike our moral code and our tendency to deviate from it." *No* course is absolutely 'safe'; that is conceded when 'conscience' is pronounced fallible. The man with a bad code, as the religious persecutor, will be doing right (by Fowler's own subsequent test) if on a prompting of pity he swerves from what he believes to be the right rule of persecuting for heresy. In that case either he is not 'following conscience' or 'conscience' is his final determinant state of compassion. On the latter view conscience is simply the *latest* state of moral feeling. This would yield only the nugatory precept, 'Do as you finally feel inclined to.' But the other conception yields only the precept: 'Do what you have commonly felt to be right,' which is a veto on reconsideration of moral judgments; and, inasmuch as an impulse to reconsider a moral judgment is itself plainly of the order of moral reflection which is generally connoted by 'conscience,' such a veto is constructively immoral or anti-moral. Thus, either way, the process of precept adds nothing whatever to the total moral preparation which is signified by 'conscience.'

Assent, then, may be finally given, on one head, to the same writer's pronouncement, with regard to the terms 'conscience' and 'moral sense,' that "the scientific moralist.....would do well to avoid these terms altogether." As regards 'conscience,' the point has been sufficiently proved. 'Moral sense,' however, is hardly in the same category, though that phrase too is apt to generate fallacy.

Duty.—As a moral term this arises simply as a noun from *due*, and originally equated with the *noun* 'due' or 'dues.' A man's 'duty' might be either what was owed to him or what he owed. Thus was formed the verbal label for the moral (as distinct from the physical) *must*. The 'sense of duty' or 'obligation,' of 'ought' or 'must,' as apart from an instinct to defend or avenge oneself, may be taken as instinctive or à priori not only in the case of a mother in relation to offspring, but of the impulse to defend or succour associates. But it is capable of being inculcated and exploited in regard to many lines of action; and in such cases proves merely man's capacity of so sensating. As to this capacity there cannot be the slightest question. But it is equally certain that in many men the capacity is either slight or practically absent. The sense of duty is thus not strictly a part of '*our* moral nature,' but only of that of some. The content of 'duty' is to be further studied under 'ought.'

Free-Will and *Determinism.*—These terms and concepts will fall to be fully discussed in the course of our study of ethical systems; but at this stage it is necessary to warn the student against attaching in advance to either a presupposition which may not bear criticism. In discussion on 'free-will' so-called there is a constant tendency to confuse 'will' with 'action.' How serious is such a confusion may be realized by attempting to attach a meaning to such phrases as 'free admiration,' 'free dislike,' 'free hunger,' 'free thirst.' If 'will' were equivalent to 'action' there would be no dispute in the matter.

It is further important to note that the dispute over free-will comes of a theological dilemma. The pre-Christian Greeks and Chinese never debated the matter at all (save possibly as a result of Plato's dubious teachings about future rewards and punishments): the Christian dogmas of the 'fall' and of hell, resisted by pagan common sense, put theologians upon manufacturing a correlative indictment against all sinners.

Determinism, again, must not be supposed to imply either 'compulsion' or 'excuse,' which have no more relevance to 'will'

than to 'admiration' or 'thirst.' Determinism is simply the assertion that men act in consequence of their structure and antecedents —heredity and training, habit, knowledge, and misinformation being all alike involved.

Good and *Bad.*—The multi-significance of these terms is evidently irreducible. 'Good' is unalterably descriptive of things or actions regarded as (*a*) merely desirable, pleasant, useful, skilful, wise, accurate, superior in their kind, and so on; or (*b*) morally admirable, or benevolent, or just, or productive of happiness. And so, *vice versa*, with 'bad.' But we can usefully distinguish our meanings in the phrases 'a good man' and 'a good action,' and 'a bad man' and 'a bad action.' By 'a good man' we should indicate one who seriously wishes to do what he has been taught or believes to be good, especially when he counts on promoting general happiness or averting harm by his action, even though his action, as causing avoidable harm, is to be pronounced bad. A good action is one both meant to do and really promotive of good to others. 'A bad man' should mean one who is heedless whether his acts cause suffering or not. It would be a bad historical confusion to describe as necessarily bad men the myriads who have conscientiously and sacramentally wrought human sacrifices and eaten human flesh, though many of them were doubtless bad in the strict sense.

Moral, immoral, and *morality.*—It is hardly possible to restrict these terms to single functions. Inasmuch, however, as many seriously framed and intensely respected moral codes of the past are seen on scrutiny to have been largely bad rules for life, causing much avoidable and unprofitable suffering, it is clear that 'moral' should not *necessarily* mean 'right,' for not only are the codes fitly to be termed moral codes, but the men who devoutly obeyed them are to be described as acting morally. The term 'immoral' is most usefully to be applied to conduct which (or the man who) defies principles or rules of action *professed* by the person under notice. It should not be regarded as necessarily meaning 'very bad' in any sense. An admittedly immoral act may do very little harm; and a purposively moral act may do a very great deal of harm. In other words, an act, like a code, may be moral, as being done under a sense of duty, and yet be demonstrably bad, as working much avoidable evil.

Ought.—This vocable, the preterite of the verb *owe*, illustrates notably the development of the language of morals. First we had such phrases as 'He *ought* [owed] his neighbour money,' 'They ought [owed] the king obedience.' But, *owe* being substantially

fixed to the conception of debt, and *owed* being available as the preterite for that, 'ought' came to be a convenient equivalent for 'are under obligation,' in any tense, and also as an imperative. It thus serves to express the same concept as 'duty,' which term arises in the same way from *due*. What has happened is a gradual detachment of a term from its logical as from its etymological root, so that *ought* serves the purpose of those who seek to retain in ethics the concept of compulsion set up under theology by alleging the command of God. But the rational meaning of the word is fundamentally conditional. *If* I admit a certain principle (as reciprocity, or a code of honour, or the sway of a law), or desire to secure a certain result, I *ought* to do so-and-so. Or 'you ought to do so-and-so' because an obligation has been created legally or by the law of reciprocity, or because that is the way to attain your wish, or because it will 'do you good,' etc. Any 'sense of oughtness' in us is just our degree of response to such propositions.

Responsibility.—Much ethical history is involved in this term. It obtrudes in two connections:—(1) As part of the Free Will argument; and (2) over the issue of the sanity or insanity of a given criminal. The ethical implication is in these cases the same: if the offender is insane he is 'not responsible'; if man 'has not Free-will,' same plea. But the argumentation in regard to the criterion of sanity shows that no real doubt is felt in the other case, whether by free-willers or by determinists. The test of action: 'What do you propose to *do* about it?' reveals this. If the man be held to be insane, we decide not to *punish* him—that is to say, his detention is not *called* punitive. With regard to the 'sane' criminal, no determinist ever proposed impunity.

It is only for the theologian that there is any dilemma; and he indicates his perplexity by many prevaricatory pleas. It is clear that, if deity be omnipotent and omniscient, *deity* cannot have any case against the evil-doer, who in the terms of the case is working deity's will. Responsibility has a rational meaning only as expressing a relation between man and man. And the determinist position differs from that of the free-willer only in that it must in decency renounce the desire to cause suffering to an evil-doer unless such a course is believed to tend to alter the course of the evil-doer. Sheer 'revenge' against a human being, that is to say, is on all fours with sheer revenge against an animal. But both 'blame' and 'penalty' are rational in so far as they may conceivably affect the volition of the recipient. Some opponents of determinism argue that it is irrational to blame any one for his actions if these are the natural

outcome of his structure; and so with praise. But on this view it is irrational to praise a beautiful face, animal, or thing, work of art or landscape. Praise in those cases is obviously the expression of a spontaneous pleasure; and so with the dispraise of things felt to be ugly, or offensive to any of the senses. But blame of an action is on the same footing. If the person blamed is felt to be incapable of being influenced, there is indeed nothing to be gained by telling *him* what we think of him. But such a person is in effect classed as either physically or morally insane. When he is held both sane and capable of being influenced he is pronounced *responsible;* and praise, blame, and penalty are the modes of influence.

Here the etymological meaning points straight to the ethical interpretation. The 'responsible' person is one who makes *response*, who *responds*, to moral pressure. The sense of 'liable to penalty' is secondary. Ethics has absolutely no need of any further connotation. The connotation which seeks to give a ground for eternal (or protracted) punishment of wrongdoers by omnipotence is outside rational discussion.

Right and *Wrong*.—Like 'good' and 'bad,' these terms cannot be confined to ethical meanings; but, like those other terms, they should be used with discrimination in ethical argument. They apply in ethics, of course, only to actions, not to persons. We cannot well abstain from saying that an action which we pronounce 'bad' is also 'wrong'; and there is no difficulty about saying that an action which we find 'good' is also 'right.' But we are always to keep in view that right and wrong have subjective and objective aspects, and that both alter, alike subjectively and objectively. Our own estimates of our own actions and duties alter; still more do men's estimates of past codes vary from those put upon them by those who framed or obeyed them. A few kinds of action—such as maternal and paternal care, relief of suffering, protection of the innocent weak—will always be reckoned right by all who seriously reason of right and wrong. A much larger number of actions will always be describable as right in the simple sense of 'not wrong,' not harmful to others or to the doer. But an immense number of other actions must be pronounced bad even when done with the conviction of their being right. And as we thus virtually say that men often take the wrong for the right, we commit ourselves to seeking a test in experience for the right, at least to the extent of determining the positively wrong.

We may partly enlighten our own thinking by keeping in mind the etymologies of our words. 'Right' is primarily 'straight,' and

'Wrong' is primarily 'wrung,' awry, twisted. Such terms tell of conceptions passing beyond those of the primary good = agreeable, and bad = disagreeable. But still they tell of framed 'rules' for the 'regulation' of instinctive conduct. They imply, that is, conformity or nonconformity to law or usage.

As has been argued under the heads of 'Duty' and 'Conscience,' the notion that men in practice ever found the essence of the Right-idea in the mere *holding* of some idea of 'oughtness'—the feeling that we ought to do what we feel we ought to do—is chimerical, save in so far as religious men have ever reduced their whole notion of rightness to the doing of an alleged God's alleged will.

Sanction.—The Latin term primarily stands for a 'binding' or 'fixing.' In common English use it means authority or permission. In ethics it is applied to ideas or motives external to an agent's will which are held to influence his action. Thus we have the expressions 'religious sanction,' 'legal sanction,' and 'social sanction.' The conception is treated by jurists, and by Fowler (p. 4), as divisible into classes of pleasures and of pains or penalties, which widens its bearing; 'legal sanction' on this view meaning not permission but prohibition under penalty. There can be no objection to such technical extension of the ordinary force of a term where, as here, the primary meaning is so preserved; but in ethics it is round the conception of impulsion rather than that of deterrence that debate arises. And when 'morality' is itself reckoned (as by Fowler) a sanction, confusion is apt to arise. What is meant is 'conscientious' self-approval, which undoubtedly operates as does a supposed divine approval, or a social approval. But when this is realized, the stress laid on 'the religious sanction' is obviously impaired; and it is important that those who lay that stress should be notified of the significance of the widened use of the term.

Utilitarian.—The term should not be limited to description of the doctrines or principles of those who call themselves or are called utilitarians. At no stage of moral development have utilitarian motives been otherwise than powerful in shaping both codes and conduct. The word, then, will be used in these pages to signify both explicit and implicit reference to the motive and the test of utility. It is only the 'ism' that is modern. It might be said, indeed, that nobody rejected utilitarian ideas in connection with morality until some began to point to utility as its primordial motive.

Virtue.—This word, which originally meant manliness, and technically stands for rightness in conduct generally, has unfortunately been weakened for the ordinary purposes of the English

language by a conventional restriction of its application to the chastity of women. Largely through clerical influence, indeed, the words 'morality' and 'immorality' have been in practice tacitly restricted to the sexual relation, as if there were no morality or immorality in any other. 'Virtue' was, to begin with, like so many other moral terms, etymologically ill-adapted for the functions to be imposed upon it. Framed as it is from *vir*, a man, it signified primarily manhood, courage; then the special goodness or good quality of anything, as, the virtue of herbs; then, as in Italian and French, rarity, involving value. Thus we still say 'in virtue of' = 'by force of' or 'by reason of'; and the word 'virtue' in its most general sense, as used by French and English writers in the eighteenth century, is pretty nearly equivalent to the moral sense of *Worth* as it was used in the same period. 'A man of sterling worth' still has the old force of 'A virtuous man.' But the partial specialization which is constantly going on in language makes the term a vague one in ordinary speech, and it is chiefly for the convenience of ethical discussion that it is employed with the general force of 'moral goodness.' That, and the old general force of 'quality,' surviving in the phrase 'in virtue of,' are now its most usual significations. It might be well if in ethics we substituted the old word 'righteousness.' But in the plural it still serves a common purpose, and '*a* virtue,' as applied to any quality of character, has often to be separately discussed.

PART II

THE EVOLUTION OF MORALS (PRE-PHILOSOPHIC)

Chapter I

MORAL BEGINNINGS

As morality, however defined, is now by all schools admitted to have undergone evolution from crude primeval forms, the scientific study of it must take note of that growth. To decide that we are concerned only with the analysis of our own moral processes over our own problems in a highly abstracted form is merely to refuse in the case of ethics such light as general biology throws on the study of the human body. And the refusal is in itself chargeable to bias. No natural science is afraid of its own history. Theology is; and ethics, so long in tutelage to theology, betrays its past by a similar attitude. It is nothing to the purpose to say that the anthropology of morals yields only a 'natural history,' which cannot solve the problem either of ends or of means in ethics.[1] The answer of science is that we cannot truly know our problem if we ignore its natural history; and that, precisely in regard to the metaphysics on which so many moralists fall back for formal solutions, the natural history is a part of the material vital to a reasoned judgment. In so far as metaphysics is 'ideal' psychology, it is a good deal on a par with the ideal chemistry discussed by Boyle in the seventeenth century—a subject worth the student's attention.

Inevitably, modern ethics takes into account the whole evolution of man. Sidgwick, in the preface to the first edition of his Methods of Ethics, put aside "the inquiry into the Origin of the Moral Faculty, which has perhaps occupied a disproportionate amount of the attention of modern moralists," on the avowed

[1] So P. Sièrebois, *La morale fouillés dans ses fondements*, 1866, p. 7; Professor Mackenzie, *Manual of Ethics*, 2nd ed. p. 1351; Prof. Sorley, *Ethics of Naturalism*, 1885, p. 259.

assumption that "there is something under any given circumstances which it is right *or reasonable* to do, and that this may be known." This very assumption, which he held to be implicit in all ethical reasoning, would by an inquiry into the origin of morals be shown—unless it were a mere statement that we can always make a *reasoned* choice for ourselves (which hardly yields *right* in Sidgwick's sense)—to be a fantastic proposition as concerning the whole human past. And, on the other hand, we have Sidgwick's own avowal[1] that the effort to scheme an ideal society is quite vain, though he had expressly defined Ethics[2] as "the science or study of *what ought to be.*" In the preface to his second edition (1877) he avowed that he had "been led, through a study of the Theory of Evolution in its application to practice, to attach somewhat more importance to this theory." Important work has certainly been done since by his school without any resort to anthropology for light; but probably more might have been done by the same hands with such help.

Man Part of the Cosmos.—The truth is that our whole conception of ethics, considered either as scientific or as philosophical, is widened and deepened by a realization of the proximate beginnings and the natural progression of moral judgment in man. A problem of which the handling so often ends in an attempt to grasp or adumbrate man's relation to the cosmos[3] can hardly be otherwise than clarified by seeing that relation first in the case of man emerging from the beast.

For though he emerges as *par excellence* the fighting beast, the animal who can use weapons, the animal who can speak, and so can convey acquired knowledge otherwise than by mere example or the obscure chances of heredity, his primary morality must have been on animal lines. Its roots lay, that is to say, in sex, in parenthood, and in personal and group instincts, all seen at work in sub-human animal life. The primary animal instinct of property, seen in the dog's sense of ownership of his bone and in his companion's respect for it in his presence, would be man's starting-point on that side; and his first sense of wrong would be the animal's sense of injury. Long indeed it must have been before the primary sense of good and bad, friendly and hostile, helpful and harmful, was subtilized into the concept of right and wrong. Hobbes,[4] and

[1] *Methods of Ethics*, 3rd ed. pp. 20–24. [2] *Id.* p. 4.

[3] Cp. Mackenzie, *Manual*, end; Sidgwick, *Methods*, end; Sorley, *Ethics of Naturalism*, end; Whewell, *Lect. on the Hist. of Moral Philos.*, end: Fowler, *Principles of Morals*, pt. ii, end; Prof. Wallace, *Gifford Lectures*, end.

[4] *Philosophical Rudiments* (his trans. of his *De Cive*), ch. v, § 5. Cp. the *De Corpore Politico*, pt. i, ch. iv, § 14, as to the accepted distinction between *malum pœnæ* and *malum culpæ*.

doubtless others before him, observed that animals cannot "distinguish between injury [=wrong] and harm,"[1] whereas men do, and resent accordingly the acts of their governors. But Wellhausen,[2] summing up early Hebrew religious evolution, comes to the conclusion that "good and evil in Hebrew mean primarily nothing more than salutary and hurtful; the application of the words to virtue and vice is a secondary one, these being regarded as serviceable or hurtful in their effects." Religion and ethic here tread the same path. Holy days are primarily tabooed days, unlucky days;[3] the first Gods are the Spirits who work evil;[4] the sacred is the possibly harmful. If the sacred can thus be an abstraction from the sense of utility, the right is certainly no less capable of being so.

Variation and Survival.—Doubtless the first reflective perception —the idea of the right and the wrong as distinguished from the nocuous and the helpful—like the corresponding practice, was a matter of special variation and survival. As good parenthood meant the commoner survival of the so-far-good stocks, so reciprocity in the group would mean, *pro tanto*, the relative success of the group practising it, for man as for animal. And those groups in which a simple code of reciprocity, as distinct from mere self-defence against immediate aggression, was set up and inculcated by comparatively thoughtful individuals, would so far be the more likely to leave progeny.

But the Cosmos is for Man both Destroyer and Preserver; and he is so as part of the Cosmos. The very group life which is the matrix of morality meant, at a certain stage, systematic infanticide, inasmuch as the play of sex-instinct, always exceeding the possibilities of subsistence, yielded an excess of infant life. What for the sub-human animal is mere blind abandonment of offspring is for man conscious murder—or, at least, conscious destruction of life. And the same group life meant group hostility, the negation of all reciprocities, cannibalism. From this ancestry, "trailing clouds of glory do we come," creating new forms of evil, of error, of vice, of disease, of folly, at every stage of our development, always growing in part more moral and always more in need of moralizing, still the fighting animal *par excellence*, the animal who most slays his own kind, and all other kinds, and yet breeds more than any other, and more of some other animals even than manless Nature could.

[1] This is incorrect if it be understood to be a denial that animals can recognize an injury as *accidental*. But probably Hobbes was not thinking of accidents.

[2] *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, Eng. trans. p. 302.

[3] See the treatise *Rest Days: A Sociological Study*, by Prof. Hutton Webster; University Studies, Lincoln, Nebraska, vol. xi, Nos. 1-2.

[4] See below, p. 54.

First steps.—What, then, were the first things that evolving man came to regard as 'right' or 'wrong' as distinguished from the simply agreeable or nocuous? The simple experiences indicated by the latter names were the basis and starting-point; the differentiation began with the primary distinction between the willed acts of oneself and one's fellows and the action of the elements, of the animals, of enemies. Pains from enemies, animals, or nature were 'bad'; *acts* by oneself or one's fellows could be regarded as not merely causing good or evil, but as right or wrong; a conception distinguishable as moral, and not merely physical, beginning to characterize the social life as such. Clearly, it was as organic as the primary reaction of pleasure or pain: this is the obvious à priori basis of all morality. The process of reasoning by which the spontaneous reaction took a conceptual form is but an intellectual extension of the organic process, as all reasoning is an extension of experience. What concerns us first is to trace hypothetically the modes of the extension.

Men's acts, to begin with, would only in part come under the moral conception. Many were indifferent; many could be agreeable or disagreeable to others without fully incurring either approbation or disapprobation in the serious moral sense. A general moral conception there cannot have been: only in regard to certain forms of conduct could there be a general veto. Taking such vetoes to be the beginnings of morality strictly so called, we in effect say that 'the moral sense' or 'instinct' is generated by or in the social relation, establishing itself in terms of the constant pressure of approval and disapproval.[1] Only in the few, the best variations, would the sense of reciprocity be so active as to operate steadily without the stimulus of blame from others.

In the earliest stages of the process, disapproval would tend to be efficacious by way of simple manslaughter; the habitually unreciprocal individual would be likely to be killed, or, if too powerful to be so disposed of, would be left in isolation. But is it certain that the first thing to be formulated as 'wrong' would be some special disregard of reciprocity within the group? Or would it be destructive variation from that most universal of quasi-moral animal instincts, protectiveness towards the young? Among savages, notoriously, children are treated kindly: the practice of infanticide is never to be taken as meaning habitual unkindness.[2]

[1] The social conditioning of all moral feeling is first insisted on by Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. xiii, etc.; and the part played by simple social approval and disapproval, before the establishment of codes, in *generating* moral feeling, is elaborated by William Smith in *A Discourse on Ethics of the School of Paley*, 1839, a notable work in its day, recognized as such by Professor Ferrier.

[2] See Hobhouse, *Evolution in Morals*, i, 47.

Cruelty to children (save as regards children of enemies) is a product of the advanced civilizations, and is actually a morbid growth of moral feeling. But though this variation would be absent, variation in general moral disposition would occur in primeval as in more advanced stages ; and as variation from custom is seen to be normally much reprobated in savage societies,[1] it seems likely that it would be in the primeval, *once the idea of any rule of action had emerged.*

And it would therefore seem to be as a variation from tribal or group norm that any kind of action would first come to be regarded as 'wrong.' The conception is distinctly human. As to beasts, even such a variation as destruction of new-born offspring is not known to elicit horror among the animals around. In point of fact, it appears to occur only in a state of fear, and as a blind expression of the mother's very sense of oneness—the terrified animal eating her young to prevent others getting possession of them. As to human beginnings, the problem is : Could the sense of general moral reprobation first arise in regard to such an act as either cruelty or utter disregard towards offspring by parents, whether before or at a stage at which parents normally practised infanticide under stress of scarcity ?

On the whole, this does not appear to be likely. Destructive morbid variation which directly concerned only parents and their own offspring would incur reprobation only from a comparatively benevolent set of neighbours ; and the generally benevolent variation must have been scarce in primeval times, though, as aforesaid, good parenthood would tend to ensure its own perpetuation. A contemporary 'savage,' indeed, has been known to show extreme distress at seeing a white man whip a child ; and here again we appear to be on the track of a primeval virtue, for the naturalists record that a monkey in captivity will show intense indignation when a child is beaten in its presence.[2] It is recorded, too, that among the ursine seals the male, who tyrannizes grossly over his females, is intensely attached to his offspring, and will endeavour to kill the female if he thinks she fails to take proper care of the young when the group is attacked. But precisely because concern for offspring must have underlain the perpetuation of the species, and sympathy not only with the young but with adults outside their own circle is shown by many animals, it is unlikely that the primeval male parent, though he can be inferred to have often committed infanticide

[1] Refs. in *Short Hist. of Freethought*, 3rd ed. i, 22. Cp. J. H. Weeks, *Among the Primitive Bakongo*, 1914, p. 284.

[2] Bingley, *Animal Biography*, ed. 1813, i, 96, cited by Mrs. Besant, article on "The Genesis of Conscience," in *Our Corner*, Jan. 1887, where a number of extremely interesting instances of animal sympathy are collected.

as a matter of tribal routine, would be guilty of cruelty to children often enough to evoke a tribal veto. Such a variation, in fact, would not be a broad enough basis for the erection of even the beginnings of a moral code.

We seem to be restricted, then, to the inference that the first conscious formulation of a veto on a particular line of adult conduct would take place in regard to *self*-regarding perceptions; and it seems likely that the code would begin with that inculcation of their own special rights by seniors upon juniors which we witness in the life of the Australian aborigines,[1] and which is posited in the fifth commandment of the canonical Hebrew decalogue, where the sacerdotal laws preceding it are visibly secondary[2] as compared with the curt and primitive laws of conduct. It is there the first of the social as distinct from the sacerdotal precepts, the vetoes on murder, adultery, and theft coming after it. This then would come before any general perception of the need for reciprocity. That would arise in detail. The kind of conduct for which a member of the group would tend to be angrily killed (in the prudential killing of infants and the aged there is no anger) would be either a special kind of aggression or a habitual disregard of every claim on reciprocity. But the precept of respect for parents would arise in normal family life through the self-interest of the aged, who depended finally for subsistence on the younger adults.[3]

Morality, thus considered, begins on the positive side, as a precept of unselfishness motived by self-interest, but thereafter proceeds markedly on the negative side, as a necessary veto on conduct that is plainly or inferably injurious to the group, or is supposed to be so. The group interest would not indeed be recognized *only* by way of utilitarian inference from that of the individual: among animals it is seen to be felt by way of spontaneous sympathy. But though altruism was thus as instinctive as egoism, the code would still be mainly negative, because it was vetoes that were required. The concept or notion of 'right,' the inculcated admiration for unselfishness, was inferably a much later evolution. Unselfishness was commonly displayed by parents as a matter of

[1] "It is the duty of every one to supply certain other older people with food, and this they do cheerfully and ungrudgingly." Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Native Australia*, 1904, p. 32. Cp. Avebury, *Origin of Civilization*, 7th ed. pp. 335, 365, as to the inculcation by the old of the duty of supplying them.

[2] See below, pp. 73–75, as to the growth of the canonical decalogue.

[3] In the matter of respect for parents, as in every other moral aspect, however, mankind exhibits great variation. Not only is the aged savage often put out of the way by his offspring, with his calm consent, when there is difficulty in maintaining or moving him, but in some low tribes parents are often treated with disrespect. The maximum of subordination appears to be obtained in China and among Moslems, as among the ancient Hebrews. The influence of Sacred Books is at work in all three cases. On the whole subject see Dr. Westermarck's *Moral Ideas*, vol. i, ch. xxv.

course (the infanticidal Eskimo father always sees his children fed before himself);[1] and would probably be normal in that regard. If not a formal precept, some penalty against gross selfishness or aggressiveness among the young would also be a matter of course, unless the marked indulgence shown to the young among all savages were carried further by primeval man than by the affectionate female monkey, who chastises vigilantly those of her offspring seen to bully the others.[2] The mother would naturally applaud the unselfish child. But on other sides, probably, admiration would first be freely bestowed on the mighty hunter or fighter. In early codes, of necessity, the moral law is mainly a matter of 'thou shalt not.' In the canonical Hebrew decalogue the first four laws are purely religious, and are hieratically imposed on a simple legal code, analogous to, but much more primitive than, the Roman Twelve Tables. Such a precept as "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" is unquestionably much later; and primeval man, long antedating any code, must have begun with a very simple set of negations of special acts, not reduced to any generalization whatever.

The use of speech, which so vitally differentiates man from the lower animals, would from its earlier stages be an instrument to evoke and emphasize conscious moral judgment, developing memory and thus partly countervailing the impulses of passion as among kindred. But primeval speech permitted small range of reflection; and even the curt 'Thou shalt not' of the Hebrew barbarian would be long preceded by a no less simple specification of duty to parents and regard for primary tribal needs, such as obedience to the leader in the hunt or the fight.

Any wider original basis than this of the simple partial control of egoism by some of the reciprocal needs and claims of members of the group is inconceivable for primitive man. A general respect for life certainly did not exist, unless primitive man, albeit nearer the beast, was more philanthropic than the most primitive savages of our own time. Any inculcated obligation of truth-speaking could arise only as regarded the common interest of the group, like the obligation to keep watch, or to notify the neighbourhood of game.

[1] Among a few Malay tribes, the father eats before his wife and family, sometimes leaving them next to nothing, though they may have procured all the food, as may be seen in the case of the gorilla. (Skeat and Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula*, 1906, ii, 87.) This variation in a human tribe may conceivably be a result of the imposition of a caste of conquerors, who would not eat with the women whom they had taken from the vanquished. Compare, as to the separate meals of the sexes among the Maories, J. Macmillan Brown, *Maori and Polynesian*, 1907, p. 68. The better ways of the Eskimos, again, might be reckoned a result of 'natural selection,' the best fathers leaving most progeny.

[2] Mrs. Besant, as cited, p. 36, quoting Bingley.

Taboos.—There is just one other relation in regard to which an early veto might conceivably be a factor in forming the moral sense—the sexual relation within the family or group. It is a plausible speculation[1] that the earliest human groups would in this regard be like herds of wild cattle and horses, or the small groups of anthropoid apes, the strongest male dominating the whole until ousted by a younger and stronger rival who overthrew him. On that view, the creation of a 'taboo' which made an end of promiscuity and forced the young male to look for his mate outside the familial or tribal group, would be a fortunate moral variation, which alone made further social evolution possible. And as a law of exogamous marriage is found among many tribes who have not yet risen to the agricultural stage, it is quite conceivable that such a taboo was set up in primeval times in the races which were to become civilized. And where marriage by capture may have set up individual property in wives, perhaps in groups tending to promiscuity, a veto on interference with a man's conjugal rights would also be a conceivable ground of moral feeling. It would, in fact, be an early form of the instinct of property.

> The whole problem of the beginnings of human society is still, and may always remain, unsettled. Obviously, when dealing with an evolution which is reckoned by some to have taken well-nigh a million years,[2] there can be no pretence of marking moral and mental advance even by æons. But, infinitely slow as was the rise from man-ape to man, and from primeval to 'primitive' man, we cannot fall back on a formula of "the ages before morality."[3] There is no stage at which man conceivably became 'moral' after having been definitely non-moral. If there are germs of morality in sub-human animals, the human can never have been collectively devoid of them. He can only have grown slowly, and at his best, more moral. In the German phrase, *Alle Sitten sind sittlich*—All customs (*mores*) are moral, in the large scientific sense. Many were certainly bad; but they were still bad morals; and bad morals is not the same thing as either non-morality (a-morality) or immorality. They were errors in morals, on a par with the vast mass of errors in the interpretation of natural sequences. The one hinged on the other. Practically all savages regard all disease, and what we call 'natural' death —or even death from snake-bite—as the work of evil spirits.[4] Hence universal sorcery, and universal blind vengeance under

[1] See *Social Origins* (by Andrew Lang), *Primal Law* (by J. J. Atkinson), Longmans, 1903.
[2] Dr. Arthur Keith, *The Antiquity of Man*, 1916, p. 519.
[3] Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, p. 55, citing Jowett.
[4] See refs. in *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. pp. 1–2.

the sorcerer's direction. The wild delusion as to fact involves wild evil-doing and its 'moral' ratification by the 'moral sense.'

As the delusion about evil spirits is a sequel of religious beginnings arising out of man's sense of 'the infinite' and the 'unseen,' it is one of the purely human evolutions of evil. There is no reason to suspect the gorilla of believing in ghosts, though he is very apprehensive of physical danger. But even sorcery varies morally in respect of the external conditions: the Eskimos, who are very deferential to their wizards, are not led by them to the bloody deeds that accompany the belief in evil spirits among so many tribes of savages less hardly situated.

Primeval man, in any case, being less capable of superstition, may well have been more sane in his simpler morals than vast masses of his posterity. The Eskimos, by their way of life, suggest a society lasting from the last glacial epoch; and they admittedly exhibit the qualities of family affection and mutual helpfulness. But the genially animal Eskimo, whose explicit ethic is chiefly an insistence on all the old quasi-religious usages as vital to the safety of the community,[1] and who is little given to marital jealousy, can hardly represent the moral norm of early man in normal life conditions. He would be a denizen of a warm climate, with a tropical temperament.

The general question of early human promiscuity in the sexual relation is very fully discussed by Dr. Westermarck, who comes to a negative conclusion.[2] But the student should weigh on the other hand the careful argument of Messrs. Spencer and Gillen,[3] to the effect that the elaborate regulations under which the Australian aborigines, while rigidly specifying the lines of relationship within which marriage is permitted, nevertheless allow 'lending of wives' within those limits, were preceded by a period of far more indiscriminate sexual life, indicated and commemorated by fixed occasions of quasi-religious promiscuity. It is necessary, finally, to keep in view the possibility that man evolved in some places or periods on 'horde' lines, like the social monkeys, and in others on familial lines.[4]

On some or all, then, of those primary bases of (1) personal right, (2) need of elders for sustenance by the young family, (3) tribal peace in the matter of the sexes, and (4) tribal good in respect of the struggle for existence—and on no other, can we conceive of a beginning of

1 See Rasmussen, *The People of the Polar North*, Eng. trans. 1908, pp. 123–25.
2 *History of Human Marriage*, 2nd ed. p. 2 *sq.* and chs. iv, v, vi.
3 *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, 1899, ch. iii; *Northern Tribes of C. A.* 1904, ch. iv.
4 On the general problem of primeval promiscuity, cp. B. Thomson, *The Fijians*, 1908, p. 194; Howitt, *Native Tribes of South East Australia*, 1904, p. 281; Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, p. 32.

moral law and self-conscious moral opinion in primeval groups. And on all the lines a perception of utility, whether by a guiding few or by many, must have underlain or accompanied the acceptance of the law or the opinion by the group. The notion that utility as a standard of conduct is a modern invention proceeds upon the falsification of moral history by religion and the exigences of a theistic theory. Here, as in regard to every other rational extension of organic perception, the primary or intuitional is raised to the reasoned notion by a continuous process; but the general perception of utility as advantage is primary.

Then, as now, the self-regarding sense of utility might clash with the code growing up out of tribal needs and tribal sentiment, as when fear might check response to the 'duty' of avenging a fallen kinsman or tribesman; and where the 'duty' carried the day, the moral imperative would not take the utilitarian form. But neither would the obedience be a conscious rejection of utility in the presence of a consideration felt to be higher. The duties of vengeance, of helping the tribe or group in battle and in the chase, would be as spontaneously felt as any utility discovered by experience. It would be in respect of new usages or ordinances—a rare thing in primeval as in savage evolution generally—that the sense of utility would be reasoned from. For many, whose influence would decide, the new usage or veto would be a matter of conscious calculation, and at no stage can divergent variations have been wholly lacking. An absolutely universal, spontaneous perception of the rightness or wrongness of any course can never have existed, as it does not exist now. At most there would be, as now, a very large consensus on certain lines; and in regard to the right of vengeance, especially upon aliens, the agreement would be nearly universal. Thus morality in its earliest human stages is a more or less necessary adaptation of man in society to his social relations; and always the general adaptation is partly countered, not only by marked variations from the required norm, but by the primary and persistent egoism which limits the observance of the general rule of reciprocity, and makes extremely difficult and slow any extension of it.

Arbitrary Extensions.—None the less clearly is it true that the general capacity for acceptance of moral vetoes was early used to set up a quasi-moral code which had only hypothetical utilities behind it. The savage's net of custom, the labyrinth of taboo which is an integral part of his moral law, is a relatively factitious framework. Not that it is to be dismissed as 'unnatural' in any strict sense of that term—which indeed can bear no stricter meaning than

'abnormal' or 'revolting to normal feeling.' Those moralists who insist that we have 'disinterested' moral inclinations by 'a law of our nature' are making a supererogatory strife. We cannot have any inclinations whatever save by a law of our nature: the morbid or the criminal bias is in that sense as natural as any other. And the taboos which to us seem most absurd were certainly set up by a process on all fours with those by which were established the taboos most vitally necessary to social continuity. It is far from certain, indeed, that taboos which we should reckon absurd did not precede many which we should reckon judicious. They are certainly numerous and ancient.

They are accordingly to be regarded as unhelpful and therefore impermanent variations of the developing group-proclivity to establish vetoes. But for the time being they subsist by absolutely the same tenure as that of the most fundamentally necessary taboos; and neither could primitive man, nor can modern man, detect any difference in the psychic procedure by which they held good, save in so far as any given tribesman lent himself more readily to the vitally useful taboos which he may have more readily appreciated. And that the difference would often be the other way—that the absurd religious taboo would frequently be acquiesced in the *more* readily—may be inferred from the phenomenon of the Thug, the religious assassin, and the devout brigand of some modern Catholic countries. Such types are deeply reverent of the code which peremptorily commands religious observances, or even the murder of the heretic, and tranquilly oblivious of the commands 'Thou shalt not kill' and 'Thou shalt not steal.' In primitive if not in primeval times their analogues were probably numerous.

Thus good and evil alike root in the very nature of things. Not only is the destructive relation between communities, the practice of warfare, a matter of acute pleasure to many of those concerned, men eagerly welcoming, in the hunting as in the feudal stage, the beginning of a war and intensely enjoying the successful pursuit of it; but in the earlier stages of civilization the same pleasure is visibly and avowedly felt in the practice of murder and robbery as against the members of the same stock or even community. It would even seem that in some stages of development, when population is nomadic or widely scattered, the primitive natural checks of moral codes are of little force, and criminality is a species of glory.[1] Forever the pendulum swings between lawlessness and law, and

[1] Cp. Avebury, *Origin of Civilization*, 7th ed. p. 326 and refs.

popular standards rise and fall with the success or failure of the administrative systems that seek to enforce the codes. Yet where lawlessness gains ground there emerge new standards;[1] brigandage has its ideals of magnanimity and honour; and in our own day we find story-tellers retrospectively making heroes of highwaymen.[2] Ethic, in short, is but the explicit or tacit adjustment of men to a given relation. As the relation varies, the doctrine varies; and we shall see that progress in theoretic or philosophic ethic rather follows than leads, or at least follows as often as it leads, the social changes which involve changed human relations.

Considered quite objectively, as a simple cosmic phenomenon, morality, like man, is to be regarded as a 'survival of the fittest'; that is, the fittest to *survive* in a given set of conditions. That a principle of reciprocity *has* survived through all vicissitudes is a proof that that moral basis is part of the nature of things: there can be no survival without it. But the reciprocity that survives is simply *ad hoc*, only so much as ensures survival at the given level. There is no force in nature *securing* the survival of goodness, beyond what is necessary to the continuance of the species, though such survivals may and do take place, even as the tendencies which conflict with them survive.[3] As a brain, or a man, may represent any conceivable combination of the faculties and proclivities of the species, the variation being limited only by the conditions of 'viability,' so a group or community may represent any conceivable medley of good and bad within the limits of social coherence.

Moral like artistic superiority may co-exist in a given brain with lack of faculty for self-protection; it may, in fact, motive sheer self-sacrifice;[4] and intense egoism, entailing the callous infliction of evil on others, may characterize a personality highly qualified to safeguard itself and its offspring. 'The pleasures of malignity'[5] are noted as very perceptible in the civilized state: they must have been common in the primitive. Many times must high unselfishness and beneficence have emerged only to be struck down by brutality: it is

[1] See, for instance, in Burton's *First Footsteps in East Africa*, Dent's ed. p. 128, the context of the passage cited by Avebury in last ref.

[2] Compare the words of Glaucon, speaking as for Thrasymachus, in Plato's *Republic*: "That which is best, to commit injustice with impunity." "For all men believe in their hearts that injustice is far more profitable to the individual than justice" (pp. 359–60).

[3] "The organized moral qualities cannot normally transcend in power, as motives of human action, those which secure man's physical preservation. Lines of men in whom the sympathetic and generous qualities predominate over the self-preservative must inevitably become extinct." E. D. Cope, *The Origin of the Fittest*, 1887, p. 237.

[4] *E.g.*, the story given by Waitz from Gregg (*Anthropologie*, 1862, III, i, 168) of the Choctaw who, when his cowardly brother, who had committed a murder, feared to face the consequences, gave himself up to death on his brother's behalf, merely calling upon him to provide for the family in future. Stories of self-sacrifice for the community of course abound in classic and barbaric records.

[5] The phrase is Bain's, *The Emotions and the Will*, 3rd ed. p. 187.

as much the self-eliminating power of brutality as the self-preserving and propagating power of love that determines the continuance and progress of the latter. And the very quality of it, which so vastly widens the interest of life to the perceiving mind, is at the same time the condition of the keenest suffering that can arise from the mere contemplation of evil.

Objective and Subjective Aspects of Moral Evolution.

The emergence of new evil at each step in the social evolution of man is one of two correlative truths. Objectively considered, the spheres of moral good and evil expand with each enlargement of social relations as the spheres of physical pleasure and pain enlarge with the extensions of nervous organization in animal life. The subjective processes, however, are only in part analogous; and in our views of moral evil we must guard against ascribing to the individual our objective conception of his moral life. What appears to us as moral evil on retrospect was perhaps for the most part not so cognized in enaction, even by the sufferers, and, of course, still less by the agents. The non-recognition of moral evil as such is, in fact, one of the aspects of moral evil to the moral perception. But to say this is to say that only the heightened moral perception is aware of moral evil in the fuller ethical meaning of the words. Only in this sense does the capacity for moral pain increase with the widening or multiplying of the moral relations in respect of which wrong-doing can increase.

This philosophic caveat, however, does not alter the problem in any optimistic sense. Moral pain, understood as a perception of the want of moral goodness in others, is a much less acute form of suffering than many of those directly inflicted by wrong-doing, and experienced by the sufferers either as physical pains or as deprivations or oppressions. The contemplation of slavery, indeed, may be more painful to the observer, contemporary or retrospective, than it was to some or many of the enslaved, but it cannot have been more painful than was the actual sense of bondage, to say nothing of the common physical ill-treatment, undergone by some or many actual slaves. If they did not consider the sorrow inflicted on them in the light of a doing of wrong, they suffered none the less, they probably suffered the more, from the simple bondage and the cruelty. It is that actual suffering, in fact, that sets up, through sympathy, the moral pain of the percipient observer. There would be no serious moral problem if certain alterable lines of human action did not cause avoidable and unprofitable suffering. Broadly speaking, it is because wrong action does harm that it is wrong.

We set out, then, with the two-sided truth that every advance in social relationship involves at once new possibilities of satisfaction and of suffering, and, equally, new possibilities of what is rationally cognizable as moral good and moral evil, caused and experienced in respect of conduct in the new relations. It is yet another aspect of the same process that every addition to human capacity involves additional possibilities of evil, moral or physical. On this side, moral is seen to quadrate with intellectual evolution. Broadly speaking, man may be said to have begun to lie as soon as he could speak, and to blunder as soon as he could reason. And there was no factor of natural selection that tended to eliminate fraud and delusion as forms of physical unfitness are eliminated in the struggle for existence.

Fraud could confer advantage; and special individual sagacity, raising its possessor above common delusions on the topics of primitive speculation, would as a rule endanger him if avowed, and, unavowed, would be likely to set him upon fraudulent exploitation of the delusion of others. Neither honesty nor benevolence conferred any such advantage in the struggle of existence as came of physical strength and skill.

The Position of Women.—On the moral side of things, egoism and altruism found new openings with each advance in the social process. The very mating of primitive man, by reason of his power to 'look before and after,' has features of aggressive egoism not developed in the lives of any other animals. As man is the only wife-beater, so he is the one who commits rape, captures his wife, and makes her a drudge; though we see beginnings of all those modes in the life of seals and gorillas, with their more docile mates. And even in respect of his desire to create a home, he sets up conditions of new discord. The 'woman question' begins at that stage. So long as the human female, like the sub-human, lived a life of physical movement as did the male, she would no more than the animals revolt against her special lot. Pregnancy and lactation would not unbalance her any more than any other lower animal, save in respect of more protracted suckling. But home-keeping, the necessary step to civilization, was for her the beginning of a new discord with her environment; and the strife of the sexes, unknown to the sub-human, began with domesticity. The unfree wife, physically ill-adjusted to the stationary state, tended to become quarrelsome, and the male would duly react.

[The evidence as to the special unhappiness of the female among contemporary primitives leaves little room for doubt as to the primeval experience.[1] Compare, however, Dr. Howitt[2]

[1] See, in particular as to the women of the Ainus, *Life with Trans-Siberian Savages*, by B. Douglas Howard, 1893, pp. 194-97; as to the Fijians, T. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, ed. 1870, p. 145; and as to the women of the Australian aborigines, see Avebury, *Origin of Civilization*, 7th ed. p. 80; and *Prehistoric Times*, ed. 1912, p. 429, citing Eyre and Grey.

[2] *Native Tribes of South-Eastern Australia*, 1904, pp. 273–82.

and Messrs. Spencer and Gillen,[1] whose testimonies show that sheer 'marriage by capture' is not the rule, and that an element of romance and elopement chequers the brutality of aboriginal life. So, too, among the Fijians.[2] On the other hand, it does not appear that if group marriages *did* precede individual marriage it was a worse life in general for the women than the latter.

It is a remarkable fact that the women of the Eskimos, in whose life equality of movement is least desirable for the female, appear to be the happiest among contemporary primitives. Among the Veddahs of Ceylon, as described by the brothers Sarrasin,[3] and the Bushmen of Africa, with a similar equality of life, there is a similar contentment; and in African life generally, the climate encouraging inaction, the women appear to be more contented than those of hunter tribes in other countries, though hardly to be described as happy.[4]

The general inference that animal equality of freedom of movement between the sexes conduces to their animal contentment in union is borne out by the facts of the life of tramps in civilized countries. There the contentment of the children, carried by the mother, is perhaps more notable than that of the mothers; but the latter, too, comparatively free as they are to change their mates, exhibit an *insouciance* approximating to that of the sub-human female. But the conditions of equality in the barbaric stage seem precarious. Among the Fijians, by one account, the women were frequently "tied up and flogged" by their husbands, a state of things recalling the life of the Ainus. But other observers give a pleasanter account of the Fiji situation; and it is recorded of the former life of the Maori women that "on the whole" their position was "far from unsatisfactory."[5]]

Moral suffering would seem to have been specially involved, for the savage woman, in the economic as in the physical conditions. Infanticide was chronically expedient, and fertility was a salient evil. When she bears twins the savage woman is execrated, sometimes driven to the wilderness, sometimes killed with one, or it may be both, of the twins.[6] But here again there is endless variation. We are not to suppose that the savage mother invariably or even as a rule sorrows over infanticide any more than does the father. Among the Melanesians, in some places, "the old women of the village generally determined whether a new-born child should live; if not

1 *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 104; and *Northern Tribes*, p. 32.
2 Williams, as cited.
3 Cited by Prof. Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution*, i, 43.
4 As to discontent on their part, see p. 605 of article on "The Bulu and his Women" in *Atlantic Monthly*, Nov. 1916, by Mrs. J. R. Mackenzie, proceeding on missionary experience.
5 Avebury, *Prehistoric Times*, pp. 436, 446.
6 C. Partridge, *Cross River Natives*, 1904, p. 62; Major Leonard, *The Lower Niger and its Tribes*, 1906, p. 458. (See p. 311 as to destruction of house utensils.)

promising in appearance or likely to be troublesome it was made away with."[1] Fijian mothers, again, have been known to let a child starve to death rather than take the trouble to walk a hundred yards once a day for milk.[2] In the Fijian case the 'absence of the maternal instinct' is by a keen observer held to result from the fact that under the *Pax Britannica* the natives are no longer concerned as of old to have children to fight for the tribe and maintain their parents.[3] But in the state of normal tribal war, as among the Maories, infanticide was very common.[4] On the other hand, among the cheerful and peaceful Eskimos and Laplanders, where the women's comparative equality preserves a balance of animal happiness, barring famine, the grief of infanticide is often acutely felt.[5]

[As regards twins there is the same variety of practice. Ingenious explanations (in terms of the Australian aborigines' belief that a birth is the result of an ancestral spirit's entrance into the mother) have been suggested for the Australian objection to twins;[6] but the fundamental one is probably the simple savage dread of the burden of feeding two new mouths when it is hard enough to feed one. But infanticide, it is said, was not practised in Samoa; and twins and triplets are not killed in Polynesia.[7] Sometimes twins are viewed as merely 'unlucky,' or calling for special magical precautions.[8] Sometimes "twins are liked," "the people of a village are proud of their twins," even if they are admitted to cause much trouble;[9] and where one or both twins are killed such reasons are given as that the double birth, or the fact of one being male and the other female, points to a breach of the laws of relationship in marriage.[10]

Broadly speaking, then, the execration of twins (or triplets) and of their mother is a spontaneous development of the original attitude towards infants who were 'superfluous' in the decisive sense that they could not be fed, or that the mothers were wanted for work or other purposes. It was probably the maternal craving to preserve the offspring that secured the acceptance, on a footing of compulsory custom, of the practice in so many savage tribes of suckling children long after they are able to run about. It was a way of establishing them as 'provided for' till an age at which the fathers would be unwilling to kill them.]

In the execration of twins, once more, we find the instinctive act taking on a 'moral' form. It is not, as might be supposed, a spontaneous hypocrisy that sets primitive people on finding

[1] Codrington, *The Melanesians*, 1891, p. 229.
[2] Basil Thomson, *The Fijians*, 1908, p. 229.
[3] Thomson, as cited, p. 231.
[4] Avebury, *P. T.* p. 446.
[5] See Elie Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, pp. 33–35.
[6] Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, p. 52.
[7] Dr. G. Brown, *Melanesians and Polynesians*, 1910, p. 47.
[8] J. F. Cunningham, *Uganda and its Peoples*, 1905, pp. 70, 305–6.
[9] Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 230.
[10] Dr. G. Brown, as cited, p. 35.

moral reasons for destroying redundant offspring of which they dread the burden. The primary recoil from the double burden —felt to be unbearable because it is abnormal—*translates itself* into a moral execration of the event as unnatural and detestable. The highly objectionable becomes the evil, the accursed, in the case of twin-births as in the case of homicide or any other 'crime.' The mother herself, taught to regard twins with horror as a monstrosity, eagerly assists in putting them out of the way.[1] Where this idea is established the moral detestation felt and expressed is just as sincere and as 'transcendental'—taking no conscious thought of utilities—as in any other moral judgment.

Some rectification of the lost balance would begin in the pastoral and agricultural stages, when the more regular food supply would tend to avert the resort to infanticide, and the care of the young animals would give the domesticated woman her share of action and occupation. But there, too, while the hunting life subsisted alongside of the agricultural, the woman's lot tended to be one of relative drudgery, the toil of the field being hers, while his was the joy and excitement of the chase. And when, with increasing fixity of agricultural domicile, growing wealth brought relief of toil to the family of the free landowner, it was by way of the new institution of slavery, a new evil in the life of the planet.

Within doors, too, the evolution remained constantly one of good shadowed by accompanying evil. The now permanent family, fixed in its home, in itself becomes progressively a tyranny up to the stage of reasoned legislation by a supreme power which modifies custom. The tyranny can be seen at a primary stage in the life of the gorilla. The male parent protects his group, but compels his mates and grown children to gather food for him.[2] In early Roman law the *patria potestas* is revealed as a gross tyranny, imposing virtual slavery.[3] Yet the establishment of the family appears to have been one of the cardinal steps in building progressive human society.

From the beginnings of domesticity, indeed, the disparity of life which set up the *malaise* of the woman tended to elicit the compensation of a more compassionate spirit. That women were the first domesticators of animals seems very likely; and the influence of the mother over the child in the protracted period of suckling and home life would be one of the first modifying forces in the life of man as compared with the anthropoids. It is not to be supposed either that all the women would be alike compassionate, or that they would carry

[1] Ling Roth, *Great Benin*, 1903, p. 36; and Major Leonard, as cited.
[2] R. Hartmann, *Anthropoid Apes*, Eng. trans. 1885, p. 233; R. L. Garner, *Gorillas and Chimpanzees*, 1896, p. 216.
[3] Prof. W. A. Hunter, *Introd. to Roman Law*, 1883, pp. 7, 26; Lord Mackenzie, *Studies in Roman Law*, 1880, p. 135.

compassion beyond the bounds of their group—whether of birth or of marriage. In Africa the women will slay the unsuccessful rain-doctor; and a mob of women can be very savage indeed. The female appears to vary emotionally rather more than the male in respect of her wider potentiality of physical function; and in the North American tribes we find specially assigned to the women the task of torturing prisoners at the stake. But there too there were variations towards better life, as when a bereaved mother would adopt as her son the captive youth who would otherwise be burned at the stake, and whose life lay in her power.

Broadly speaking, the sex function, as the primary collative factor in animal and human life, and, as we have seen, one of the starting points in human morals, is also a constant factor in moral evolution; and at all stages the women count for good as well as for evil in the process. Early religion appears to look mainly to their reproductive function; and such goddess figures as Ishtar, Artemis, and Athênê do not stand for any ideal of compassion. Under decadent social conditions, again, the women take on all the aspects of demoralization; and the gloating patrician women at the gladiatorial games in Rome are the crowning horror of the scene; but in the normal progressive life at all stages they count for sympathy. Concerning the negro women we have the testimony of Mungo Park:—

> I do not recollect a single instance of hard-heartedness towards me in the women. In all my wanderings and wretchedness I found them uniformly kind and compassionate; and I can truly say, as my predecessor Mr. Ledyard has eloquently said before me: "To a woman I never addressed myself in the language of decency and friendship without receiving a decent and friendly answer. If I was hungry or thirsty, wet or sick, they did not hesitate like the men to perform a generous action....."[1]

Nor is the life of women at any stage of civilization that scene of constant 'subjection' presented in some pictures of savage and some treatises of civilized life. At every stage there are variations, some due to social conditions, as where female infanticide made women scarce and therefore 'precious'; some to the woman's self-assertive faculty; some to her charms; some, as aforesaid, to her practical importance in the agricultural stage. A wide survey of the case in various culture stages shows about as much variety in the practical status of women at most points as among ourselves to-day.[2] Chalmers noted in New Guinea the wanton killing of wives among the inland tribes, where they are easily replaced; and their better treatment on the coast.[3] The relative rise in the status of women

[1] *Travels*, 6th ed. 1810, p. 393. Compare his charming story, pp. 295–96, of how a woman took compassion on him when he was being forced to spend the night in the open, giving him food and shelter, and how the womenfolk of the house, at their spinning, made a song about the episode. Compare Barrow's *Mutiny of the Bounty*, ed. Haweis, 1886, pp. 14–16.

[2] See Dr. Westermarck's chapter on "The Subjection of Wives," *Origin of the Moral Ideas*, i, 629 *sq.*

[3] *New Guinea*, 1895, p. 150.

in 'new' countries, where they are scarce, illustrates the tendency. But whereas the 'buying' of a woman from her father tends to put her in subjection, the institution of the dowry, which would seem to originate where women are *not* 'scarce,' is held to secure their position.[1]

Group Hostilities.—Another cardinal progressive step, the creation of groups or tribes, involves new and greater evils, in respect of systematic hostility. While a spontaneous veto on cannibalism within the group may have been one of the early 'moral' laws or rules, the existence of definite groups, living in more or less definite territories, would seem to have meant a more systematic cannibalism. Men themselves starving, and venturing on another tribe's territory for food, are ruthlessly slain and eaten.[2] Cannibalism, presumably established in times of famine, thus holds its ground. Frugivorous tribes to-day are known to show a keen relish for human food.[3] This is primarily a phase of the general delight of the savage in animal food.[4] But human flesh is specially delighted in by Papuans.[5] Accordingly, even where a legend is framed which imputes to the women the first demand for human flesh, cannibalism is made a male monopoly, and a special religious machinery is set up, conserving the male privilege and sanctifying the usage.

On the whole, it latterly subsists among primitives as a sacramental eating of enemies in presence of the Gods, and has a strictly religious aspect.[6] Normally, the Australian blacks do not eat members of their own tribe; but there are exceptions. Among the Aztecs at the time of the Spanish conquest there were none, the people of the city of Mexico dying of starvation by thousands rather than eat human flesh, though such eating was their supreme sacrament.[7] But the canine teeth of the anthropoids and of primeval man testify to flesh-eating, even in frugivorous conditions; and though our scanty reports as to the life of the anthropoid apes tell only of their taste for flesh when they can get it, it is hardly to be doubted that the gorilla who slays his rival eats him.[8] If not, cannibalism must rank as a human invention.[9]

For whole eras, the internecine strifes of groups would seem to be the great feature in the moral life of man; and in the main this condition is alike morally and materially anti-

1 Starcke, *The Primitive Family*, 1889, pp. 45, 66.
2 Chalmers, *Pioneer Life and Work in New Guinea*, 1895, p. 188. As to Australia, cp. Carl Lumholtz, *Among Australian Cannibals*, 1889, pp. 101, 148, 176.
3 Frobenius, *The Childhood of Man*, Eng. trans. 1909, chap. xxxi, following Lumholtz and other sources.
4 As to which, see Bishop Bruce, *Memories of Mashonaland*, 1895, p. 41.
5 H. H. Romilly, *From my Verandah in New Guinea*, 1889, p. 66; Chalmers, *Pioneer Life and Work in New Guinea*, 1895, p. 103.
6 See refs. in *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. p. 134, *note*.
7 On the general veto, cp. H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, ii. 358.
8 Hartmann, p. 227; Garner, p. 63.
9 As to cannibalism among the cave-men and pile-dwellers, compare Joly, *Man before Metals*, Eng. tr. p. 341 *sq.*; Büchner, *Man in the Past, Present, and Future*, Eng. tr. 1872, pp. 247, 261–62; A. Keith, *The Antiquity of Man*, 1916, p. 459 *sq.*

progressive. When we read that "Neither faith, hope, nor charity enters into the virtues of a savage"; that one savage language has no word for thanks,[1] another no word for love or beloved; that "mercy was to the North American Indian a mistake, and peace an evil";[2] and when we read of the intensities of hate that outlived even the eating of the slain enemy,[3] we seem to be watching a frightful descent from the life that evolved the pathetic affections of the chimpanzee.[4] But it is essential to realize that a social evolution goes on side by side with the anti-social.

Savage Virtues.—Such pictures as are drawn by Avebury, we should remember, have often been drawn of the 'civilized' life in which all the virtues and humanities we know of have flourished. *Homo homini lupus* is a classic saying; and "man's inhumanity to man" is the theme of modern poets—Burns, Hood, Mrs. Browning, and many more. Roger Williams found the Redskins of New England selfish and revengeful, lying and treacherous. But they took exactly the same view of the whites; and Penn, who used the Redskins well, found that they thought "nothing too good for a friend," and that they were singularly unselfish.[5] Lafitau tells that hunters returning from the chase or from fishing with good bag or catch were expected as a matter of course to share freely with any in need.[6]

Hospitality, the virtue of the savage and barbaric stages, may indeed be regarded as arising out of the general sense of its utility, as any man on his travels might need it from others. But, once habitual, it was universally regarded as a moral duty, and practised without any consideration of advantage, though there is a significantly universal limitation of the time during which a guest is welcome:[7] the expression of the economic factor. Among the Redskins hospitality was so much a matter of course that the hungry could enter any hut and share the meal,[8] as happens among pioneers and frontiersmen everywhere in the outlying areas of modern civilization. This kind of reciprocity flourished alongside of extreme cruelty and treachery in warfare. And in the work of J. W. Schulz, MY LIFE AS AN INDIAN (1907), we have a striking testimony to the occurrence of upward moral variation among 'savages,' in his account of

[1] This may be a misleading datum. They may have had gestures of thanks. See Bishop Bruce, *Memories of Mashonaland*, 1895, pp. 50–53, as to the use of the gesture and the rarity of the word among the 'polite' Mashona. But he speaks of the Matabele as Avebury does of 'the savage' in general, on the point of hardness of heart (pp. 56, 72).

[2] Avebury, *Prehistoric Times*, ed. 1912, p. 540.

[3] Frobenius, *The Childhood of Man*, Eng. tr. pp. 476–80.

[4] Garner, ch. xi.

[5] Waitz, *Anthropologie*, III, i, 162–64. As to the observance of treaties by the Indians, cp. Clarkson's *Memoirs of Penn*, ed. 1849, p. 281.

[6] Compare this with the interesting remark of Basil Thomson (*The Fijians*, p. 239) that "In a communal state of society the instinct of the individual is to do and give as little as possible." Cp. p. 80 as to resentment of accumulation by individuals.

[7] Westermarck, *Origin of the Moral Ideas*, i, 595. See the whole chapter as to the vogue of the duty.

[8] Waitz, p. 165.

the passionate protest of his young Indian wife against his participation in a nocturnal foray against a neighbouring tribe. It was intensely ethical, quite spontaneous, and derived from no moral teaching by whites.

As to the evolution of respect for truthfulness among savages, there is some dispute. The testimonies as to any concern for this virtue among them are few; and there is ground for a general inference that the lower primitives hardly recognize it. Mungo Park's account of the Mandingo woman whose great consolation about her slain son was that "he never told a lie"[1] raises the question of the possible influence of Moslem intercourse. But among the Redskins, despite the general habit of boasting, there were many evidences of contempt for lying and respect for truth. There are even testimonies as to their having had higher standards than the whites in these matters before they were demoralized by intercourse with the latter.[2] The existence of international bad faith in Europe, and of bad faith in political life, on the other hand, will not be disputed among ourselves. In a word, no feature of savagery can entitle us to doubt that savages have their own moral codes, and set store by them. Nothing in anthropology, indeed, is more remarkable than the amount of testimony to the good qualities of savages whom on special and on general grounds we might be disposed to look on as subter-human.

Cannibals.—Sir Stamford Raffles wrote of the cannibal Battas, or Battaks, of Sumatra: "The Battas have many virtues. I prize them highly."[3] "Many cannibals," says an American missionary, "are very nice people."[4] "Many tribes for whom I have the greatest respect are inveterate cannibals," says Commissioner Romilly of the Papuans.[5] The cannibals and the ex-cannibals of Samoa have always found it inconceivable that in any country destitute people can ever be denied food and shelter. "Have the people there no love for each other?" they ask.[6] And always it must be realized that there is not the slightest doubt in the mind of the cannibal either about the eating of human flesh in general or about the eating of sacrificed victims in particular. "They honestly consider they are doing the correct thing," says one traveller.[7]

The famous missionary, James Chalmers (who was killed and eaten by cannibals in New Guinea), "did not find that they were in any sense the most ferocious or inaccessible of the Papuans," and said: "I have lived among cannibals and have found them not at all a bad lot."[8] His converts do not seem

[1] *Travels*, ed. 1810, pp. 153, 395. [2] Waitz, p. 162.
[3] *Life*, 1897, p. 42. [4] Dr. G. Brown, *Melanesians and Polynesians*, 1910, p. 140.
[5] *From my Verandah*, p. 68. Compare Basil Thomson, *Savage Island*, 1902, p. 104, as to cannibalism among relatively civilized and the absence of it among backward tribes.
[6] Turner, *Samoa*, 1884, pp. xii, 161.
[7] E. W. Elkington, *The Savage South Seas*, 1907, p. 95. Cp. H. W. Walker, *Wanderings among South Sea Savages*, 1910, p. 195.
[8] *James Chalmers of New Guinea*, by C. Lennox, 4th ed. p. 75.

ever to have learned self-abhorrence for past practices. And it is on record that an aged Eskimo chief, going south with comrades under stress of starvation to beg succour from a French ship, told with tears of gratitude that "the month before he had eaten his wife and two sons."[1] He was claiming pity, not confessing guilt. South Sea Islanders, under no stress of need, are as little conscious of guilt over festal or sacramental cannibalism. Earle tells a hideous story of a young Maori who captured, as a 'runaway slave' (which she was not), a young girl, tied her to a post, she thinking that she was only to be flogged, shot her dead, and ate her.[2] Yet he was "mild and genteel in his demeanour, and a general favourite with us all."

Nevertheless, a moral revolt, originating in spontaneous aversion, but taking the same form of moral confidence, is to be noted within the areas of cannibalism. The evolutionary process is here highly interesting. Whether by reason of its scarcity or of its being regarded as a strictly religious food, preserved for initiates, the eating of human flesh was in many tribes restricted to the males.[3] Elsewhere, at times, women and children were *compelled* to eat morsels of slain enemies or criminals, the rite being treated as dreadful, but sacred.[4] But a debarring of women from the act, partly on religious grounds and partly in the knowledge that they are apt to regard it with aversion (though women of the chieftain rank might partake in secret), appears to be the common antecedent of its decline and disappearance. The women, debarred from the practice, everywhere execrated it. As class distinctions developed, it was restricted to the chiefs, priests, and aristocracy of the tribe; and now the *plebs* regarded it with horror. The cumulative effect was that at length in the more advanced barbarisms (as Mexico, Fiji, Tahiti) those entitled to partake did so only symbolically, or in very small degree. Before this stage, in Fiji, we find whole towns tabooing the practice; while many of the nobles, entitled by rank to resort to it, condemned it as hotly as any one else.[5]

It is still further noteworthy that, when the religious motive and sanction for the act had decayed under pressure of contrary feeling, both sides in the debate resorted to utilitarian arguments. The 'conservatives,' loth to abandon an old and sacred practice,

[1] E. Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, p. 7.

[2] *Residence in New Zealand*, p. 117; cited by Avebury, *Prehistoric Times*, 7th ed. p. 448.

[3] As to certain Australian tribes, see Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes*, p. 548. Compare Basil Thomson, *The Fijians*, 1908, p. 104; A. E. Pratt, *Two Years Among the Cannibals of New Guinea*, 1906, p. 224; Herman Melville, *Typee*, Routledge's ed. p. 382, and App. p. 436. As to the common exclusion of women from temples and religious rites generally, see last cit.; also J. Macmillan Brown, *Maori and Polynesian*, 1907, p. 56; T. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, ed. 1870, p. 196.

[4] Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 344. Cp. Dr. G. Brown, *Melanesians and Polynesians*, p. 145.

[5] Siemann, *Viti*, 1862, pp. 179–182. Cp. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, 2nd ed. i, 309, 357; iv, 150–52; Mariner's *Tonga Islands*, ed. 1827, i, 190, 300; ii, 22; Herman Melville, *Typee*, ch. xxxii.

argued that it was required in order to terrorize the enemies of the tribe, and the lower orders within it. The reformers, on the other hand, argued among other things that it caused certain frightful skin diseases. Foreigners throwing their local influence on the side of abolition, the movement had gone far before the Christian missionaries came upon the scene. Thus a practice confidently regarded as right and religious, originating in animal instinct and consecrated by immemorial religious usage, gave way before a revulsion originating in the emotion of disgust common to those excluded from the practice. The utilitarian arguments were quite secondary. The forlorn Bushman, we are told, is never a cannibal. And it is noted that among native tribes of Californians, very low in the human scale, a horror of cannibalism, and even of the eating of monkeys, had been developed before contact with higher civilization.[1]

Savage Self-Esteem.—In conclusion, it is to be noted, as a datum for our conception of the social process in morals, that a concern for the good opinion of others *in some form* is a universal human characteristic. We are still sometimes told, as if it were a special truth, that 'the British working man' likes to be treated with consideration for his self-respect. The proposition holds good of every variety of human being from the Veddah upwards. It is true of the domestic animals, at least of dogs and monkeys, in respect of the fact that they visibly hate to be laughed at. In every race, every region, and at every stage of social development, men in the mass are noted to be sensitive to contempt, slight, discourtesy, or ridicule.[2] Thus, whatever may be the range of local variation in the estimate put upon any act, practice, custom, or characteristic, the influence of, and the response to, the pressure of surrounding opinion is so nearly universal that the conception of 'the moral sense' as being thus conditioned may be held irrefutable. But no less important is it to note that the social pressure may be wrong through ignorance; and that no mere consensus can prove the expediency of any accepted moral rule.

Thus the very evolution of morality in itself meant a new and correlative evolution of evil, even as we have seen new evil to follow upon every upward step in faculty and in social organization. The idea of rules of right and wrong, rising out of animal habit to the form of inculcated vetoes and usages, became liable to all the aberrations possible to man's immeasurable ignorance. To rules framed by way of preserving the community, and tending to do so, were added rules that decimated it in the presence of a reign of

[1] Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, i, 560.
[2] Westermarck, *Moral Ideals*, vol. ii, ch. xxxii.

group enmities which all worked for destruction, and against which the race could plan no moral machinery whatever. Morality-making man, differentiated from the beasts by that very faculty, was led by it into errors of which they were incapable. Setting up conceptions of sin which were wholly outside their existence, he wrought horrors that were equally alien to their state. The notion of evil became an instrument of new evil in the primitive moralist's hands.

Exploitation of the Sense of Duty.—One thing all the variations of moral law can be seen to have in common: they are all *believed* (by those who accept them) to conduce to utility, to the individual or the common good. This constitutes the simple unification of all the wide and numerous variations in moral code and practice between different stages, ages, and countries—variations which are so inexplicable from the point of view of the simple supernaturalist who regards his written moral law as divinely given, or his natural or acquired bias as divinely implanted. The absurd taboo is simply the acceptance of the doctrine inculcated by priest or sorcerer or elders or wiseacres as to the danger or efficacy of any given course. Early man was, so to say, a taboo-obeying animal. His social existence actually depended on the general acceptance of some taboos; and some of the earliest hygienic discoveries seem to have been translated into the taboo form. That it was dangerous to meddle much with dead bodies, especially those dead from disease, would be rediscovered by tribal man from observation, over and above the earlier discovery by sub-human olfactory instinct—a source of moral bias not to be overlooked. Disobedience to the taboo would nevertheless at times occur, and fatal consequences would set up for it just as devout an obedience as was given to the other taboos of conduct. Given such taboos, there was no limit short of sheer intolerableness to the taboos which might be set up by either ignorance or avarice sitting in the chair of the priest or the tribe-elder.

There is thus a distinct element of truth in the skeptical doctrine, current among Greeks in the age of Socrates, and in modern times at least as early as the Renaissance, that moral laws were invented by shrewd priests and despots as a means of controlling the common people. For all taboos had their vogue on the same footing, and the good are simply some of the accredited survivals. The actual survival in our own age and country of such taboos as Sunday observance[1] (involving at times the partial loss of harvests)

[1] Found among the Mashona, who rested one day in six before the advent of the missionaries, calling it 'God's day' (Bishop Bruce, *Memories*, as cited, p. 45).

and of the consecration of churches, is the proof that fundamentally factitious and sanely moral prescripts can be alike adopted and retained by the 'moral sense,' regarded as elements of 'duty,' and embodied in 'conscience.'

The Function of the Priest.—The priest, however, who has so much to answer for, must not be saddled with the responsibility of inventing taboos. There is little trace of priesthoods or fully accredited professional priests before the stage of agriculture; and the relatively slight development of the priestly caste or function in Islam would seem to result from the state of civilization of the Arabs at the time of Mohammed. There were taboos long before the agricultural stage, in which arose fixed domiciles, towns, temples, rituals.

No more remarkable system of taboo exists than the tables of permitted and forbidden degrees of consanguinity in marriage observed by certain tribes of Australian aborigines. The most complicated of all, which it has cost much investigation to explain clearly to white men, suggests by its elaboration the special influence of one organizing mind over elders who were able to impose it on their tribes as an absolute moral law. Up till the other day any deviation from it was punished by death, the aggregate population being as intensely convinced of its sacred obligatoriness as those of any civilized country can be of the immutability of the laws against incest, though the Australian code prohibits many unions to which civilized Christendom makes no objection whatever. All this death-dealing code has been built up without any priesthood. The aboriginal Australians are their own priests; and their communal rituals occupy a large part of their time, there being no agriculture to distract them.

The human sacrifices, again, which became so universal in connection with agricultural religion, were developments of older practices: what the priesthood did was to clothe with new 'sanctions' of myth and ritual the atrocities of savage routine. And the atrocities, as long as they lasted, were as truly parts of the moral code, of the conception of duty, as any commandment of which we recognize the permanent validity. Nor were the priests as a rule moral reformers. Humane priests, we say, there must have been at all stages; but what vague records we have as to the abolition of human sacrifices seem always to point to the forcible action of a humane king.[1] The Hebrew Decalogue appears to be but an

[1] See references in *Pagan Christs*, pp. 60–61.

adaptation of an early king-made code; and the small space it occupies in the mass of priestly ceremonial legislation is the proof that the priesthood is primarily concerned with its taboos, its vestments, its rites and ceremonies, its status, perquisites, and revenue. It appears to be always outside the priesthoods that new moral enlightenment emerges. Among the Hebrew prophets it is seen arising as revolt against priestly conceptions and practice, though the method is still to ascribe the new precept to the deity. "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," he is made to say at one (probably late) stage. It was only on this footing that innovating moral ideas could find currency where priesthoods were strong; and in the case of the Hebrews, sacrifice rather than mercy prevailed to the last days of the State, albeit the revolutionary precept had found lodgment in the sacred books.

Such a fact tells definitely of the early identification of ethics with religion. The first Gods having been made the sources or guardians of taboos, it was a matter of course that the group, chief, or king should make Gods the sources[1] and guardians of the legal codes which, after many communities had been welded into wholes, constituted the State-enforced rule of conduct for individuals. The ancient Code of Hammurabi, long anterior to the Pentateuch, but itself plainly an outcome of previous codes, which probably claimed divine origin, runs much to preliminary glorification of the king as the actual lawgiver; but he too claims to rule by divine right, and on the top of the pillar upon which his code is inscribed he is represented as adoring Shamash, the Sun-God, who as judge sanctifies all. In more primitive stages of barbarism throughout the world the Gods are represented as instituting the laws equally with the religions, the medicine, the agriculture, and the arts of the peoples.[2] Morality thus came to be viewed as of supernatural institution, and to the last the Greek oracles purported to be God-given.

Everywhere, too, obligation tended to be ratified by the oath, the invocation of the God as witness and as punisher of breach of faith. Hammurabi clinches his code by imprecating the vengeance of the chief Gods severally on any successor who may alter or defy it. In this way the Gods, impersonations to begin with of the savage or barbarian, and carrying with them the stamp of their origin in an infinity of a-moral myths, were on this side moralized as far as might be. Thus was built up a conception of divine morality which still, vaguely and loosely, holds good for perhaps

[1] See Plato, *Laws*, at beginning.
[2] Details are given in *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. pp. 213–15.

most men, involving the notion that without religious 'sanctions' morality can have little or no practical efficacy. That conception has to be examined and adjudged upon before a reasoned ethic can be established.

The Theory of the Ten Commandments.—A necessary first step would seem to be the reaching of some conclusion as to the variant forms of the traditional Ten Commandments. It appears to be now the view of the majority of Hebrew scholars[1] that the commonly received set of commandments, given in the 20th chapter of Exodus and the 5th of Deuteronomy, is really a late compilation; and that the truly ancient ten commandments of the Hebrews were a set of priestly precepts and taboos such as are elaborated in the 'Book of the Covenant' preserved in Exodus xx, 22–xxiii, 33, and described by Robertson Smith as "The First Legislation."[2] There is some dispute as to its exact original elements; and different scholars make out partially different tens; but they broadly coincide.[3] And the outcome is that "whichever of these reconstructions of the Decalogue we adopt.....here morality is totally absent. The commandments without exception refer purely to matters of ritual. .....Of the relations of man to man, not a word."[4]

If this, then, be really the oldest Hebrew code, our position as to an early identification of religion and ethics would seem to be overthrown. Religion, on this view, absolutely ignored ethics down to a comparatively late period. Sir J. G. Frazer, who on this point evidently feels himself in harmony with the majority of the specialists, confidently argues that the all-important moral laws which constitute the last six of the ten commandments, as given in Exodus xx, cannot conceivably, if once current, have been set aside by any priesthood in favour of a new series of mere ritual prescriptions or taboos; and that we must accordingly regard the important moral code as having come into existence much later—probably at the hands of some of the reforming prophets.[5]

It would be difficult to bring a more damning charge against early Hebrew religion; but even if Sir James Frazer's conception of it were endorsed, as he appears to infer it was, by Robertson-Smith,[6]

1 W. Addis, whose work, *The Documents of the Hexateuch*, appeared in the same year (1892) with the second edition of Robertson Smith's work cited below, does not recognize (i, 142) the documentary crux which Smith faced, and took the received decalogue to be part of the early document.

2 *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2nd ed. 1892, pp. 318, 335–36.

3 Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, 1918, i, 113–15.

4 *Id.* p. 115. 5 *Id.* p. 116.

6 Smith's positions on this as on some other fundamental issues are inconsistent. He frames the argument which shows the original 'Ten Words' of the 'Mosaic' law to have been mere ritual laws and taboos as aforesaid; but he also affirms that Moses "was a prophet as well as a judge. As such he founded in Israel the great principles of the moral religion of the righteous Jehovah" (*Old Test. in the Jewish Church*, 2nd ed. p. 305).

the naturalist student can hardly assent to the apparent implications. The assumption that no real moral code *existed* when the ritual code was formulated is simply incredible. The latter code, it is admitted, belongs to the agricultural stage. It can hardly be supposed by any investigator that as late as even the early agricultural stage there were no current vetoes on filial disobedience, murder, theft, and adultery. What is meant to be asserted must be, surely, that such a code had not been embodied *in a priestly document* at the time that the ritual code was penned (a comparatively late one, for the art of writing was much later than the practice of agriculture). *That* is a thinkable proposition. But the proposition actually before us is not so limited; and it would seem that its implications had not been realized by the accomplished scholar who framed it.

The inference that does seem to be warranted by all the data as given is that at one period among the Hebrews the Yahweh cult had been specialized into a highly formalistic and ritualistic procedure, with no moral bearings. Such a development would seem to presuppose a positive exclusion of the cult and its priests from all secular control. A secular rule of life there must have been, in Israel as in every other community; and as the normal course is for priesthoods to deal with conduct in general, the definite limitation in the Hebrew case suggests a special force of exclusion. Such a force might have been an early secular kingship which would claim to enforce secular law, and might restrict the priesthood to purely sacerdotal prescription.

The fair inference then may be that Hebrew religion was for a time hemmed-in or denied its natural development by *force majeure;* and such a possibility is to be kept in view when we put the general proposition that reforms in religion as a rule come from lay sources. But the residual fact would seem to be that moral essentials entered the official religious code of the Hebrews comparatively late by way of an adoption of a set of civil vetoes, of long prior currency. It would seem to have begun with the fifth commandment, in a simple hortatory form, without the added promise of reward. That, like the first four commandments, has the aspect of a sacerdotal addition to a simple secular code. The fact that the religious precepts are put first, argues sacerdotal manipulation; and we may surmise a primitive set of *Five* Commandments running somewhat thus:—

Honour your parents.
Kill not.
Commit not adultery.

Steal not.
Belie not your neighbour.

The tenth commandment, which forbids to 'covet' a neighbour's possessions, is evidently a late accretion, expressing the idea, developed in the Gospels, that there is sin in *wishing* what is wrong. Wrong deeds must have been condemned long before mere desires were thought matters for legal veto. To expand the secular Five Commandments to Ten would be a likely enough undertaking for a priesthood freshly establishing itself by sacred books. Ten was for early speculation a 'complete' or perfect number; and the tenth commandment may have been adopted for that reason.

Thus far, then, the assumption of a special moral efficacy in a strictly or specifically religious enunciation of moral laws is not ostensibly supported by the apparent early history of religio-ethical teaching in the first religion concerning which the claim is commonly made. We have even met with a confident assertion by a leading anthropologist that early Hebrew religion had no moral outlook whatever—a view which we have seen reason to modify. It remains to consider it in respect of the results after religion and ethics had been formally re-combined in documentary religion, as they inferably had been in the primitive stage before documents.

Chapter II

THEOLOGICAL ETHICS

Ethics may be said to become definitely theological when and in so far as it rests all duty upon alleged divine commands, and (or) promises divine punishments and rewards, in this world or another, for evil and good action respectively. Such a process, as we have seen, occurs in quite early savage stages of evolution, and is merely made more systematic in later stages. Often, indeed, the idea of *future* punishments is found fairly fully developed in an early stage of popular religion, and absent in a later stage. It is entirely absent from the 'Mosaic' system of the Jews, and substantially so from the Homeric theology; whereas Plato found to his hand Armenian or other myths setting forth a scheme of future torments for evil-doers and rewards for the good.

The question arises whether either the doctrine of rewards and punishments or the turning of all misdeeds into sins against God has had any predominant good result either in developing ethical thought or in correcting conduct by attaching supernatural sanctions to human duties. And the answer must be that, so far as religious and other history shows, there has been no perceptible balance of gain on the latter head. All 'sacred books' themselves bear witness to a constant disregard of their moral duties by professed believers; indeed, the very invention of future rewards and punishments is an avowal that men defy in this life the moral laws which have been given them as divinely ordained.

Even if we grant theoretically that a command believed to be supernatural must sometimes sway the balance of action for a superstitious mind, there is the *per contra* that divine sanctions are in ordinary course habitually assigned for acts dictated by primitive ignorance; the insane primitive taboo, as we have seen, is put on the same level as the most necessary social law; and all the weight that has ever accrued to the religious sanction tells against every attempt to rationalize a taboo or a savage practice on moral grounds. Such attempts, therefore, often spontaneously resort to pious fiction; and there is thus introduced at once into religion and ethic a fresh

element of fraud, which must tend to promote fraudulent practice in other directions. But even fraud can only in certain cases undermine evil religious sanctions: in most cases the sanction avails indefinitely to maintain a vicious doctrine or practice against the reforming moral instinct. And success would appear to be more often attainable by the sheer pressure of moral feeling (as in the above described case of cannibalism) than by the use of religious fiction, as in the case of the sacrifice of first-born sons among the Hebrews, the abolition of which seems to have been the aim of the myth of the arrested sacrifice of Isaac. We have at least a number of records of the suppression of human sacrifice by kings; and they had apparently been officially suppressed in Egypt before the day of Herodotus; whereas there is reason to suspect their late survival in Jewry.[1]

The theological factor in ethics would thus seem to be more generally a hindrance to moral progress as buttressing old doctrine than a help as recommending new; for the theology 'in possession' has necessarily the balance of prestige when first attacked. The enforced prostitution of women on religious pretexts in ancient Babylonia must have been hated and abhorred by many; and only religious sanctions could have maintained it. It is in the very essence of an established theology to be conservative; and we shall find in modern history a very learned polemic in denial of the doctrine that modern religious 'reformations' earn their name. That kind of resistance must have been normal in the ancient world. And when we apply to the problem psychological induction and deduction, we seem compelled to conclude, if we will think scientifically, that, while an official theological ethic may put vetoes on some of the criminal proclivities of the minority, it can never be above the ideals of the majority, and must therefore always tend to consecrate a number of principles that negate any high ethic. This is seen constantly in ancient religious history, and nowhere more clearly than in that which is most familiar to modern Europe.

The Hebrew God, to begin with, is a tribal deity, the favourer of one people against all others; and he represents the barbaric origins in respect of ferocity as Zeus does on the side of concubinage; while Hebrew polygamy and concubinage receive his full sanction. There can be no pretence that the Hebrew patriarchs, chiefs, and kings are above the moral level of the Homeric kings and heroes.

[1] In respect of the sacrifice of a ritual victim, Jesus Barabbas, 'Jesus the son of the Father,' upon old Semitic lines. See the author's *Historical Jesus*, pp. 171-72, and *The Jesus Problem*, per index.

Gladstone admitted the contrary.[1] Any later moralization of the Hebrew religion in respect of the universalism sought to be engrafted on it by some of the prophets after the Exile is to be set down to the influence of those alien religions which the Hebrew contemned, or to enlightening contact with the higher civilizations in which those religions flourished.

In the ancient Persian religion, with which the Hebrews came in contact under and after Cyrus, there are indeed marks of a certain intellectual attempt to face in theology a problem which faces all religious systems as soon as they reach the stage of reflection—the problem, namely, of the responsibility for evil in general that attaches to a deity who is conceived as omniscient creator and ruler of the world. Primitive religion always tended to find in human misfortune a punishment for some offence against some deity or spirit; and Judaism fully embodied this view. The moral problem is faced only to be out-faced in Isaiah xlv, 7, and in many other prophetic passages, as in Romans ix, 19–23, where the answer is theologically immoral. The extremely interesting attempt to handle it in the Book of Job evidently proceeded from and gave rise to much discussion, indicated by the successive additions to the text.[2]

As it finally stands, it is a self-stultifying document. Its ostensible thesis is a denial of the common assumption that men's misfortunes are a punishment for their sins. But to maintain this denial is in effect to deny that the world is under a moral governor, thus either rejecting theism or reverting to the common savage conception of a deity who leaves the world to itself.[3] In chapter xlii Job is made to prostrate himself before the declamation of the deity, leaving the problem simply unsolved; but in the epilogue, which may replace a suppressed portion of the original, the deity is made inconsequently to rebuke the lay rebukers of Job, and to compensate the latter with new riches and new sons and daughters—a procedure which merely leaves past and future uncompensated Jobs to raise the problem afresh. Inconclusive as the book finally is, indeed, it at least challenges the question-begging theological ethic of Jewry. But, though taken into the canon with other questioning compositions (*e.g.*, RUTH and ECCLESIASTES), it never led to any ethical or philosophic progress in official Jewish thought; having indeed

[1] *Landmarks in Homeric Study*, 1890, p. 95.
[2] Cp. Dillon, *The Sceptics of the Old Testament*, 1895, p. 43 *sq.*
[3] Cp. Paul Kollmann, *The Victoria Nyanza*, 1899, p. 169; Sir H. H. Johnston, *George Grenfell and the Congo*, 1908, ii, 636; J. H. Weeks, *Among the Primitive Bakongo*, 1914, p. 276; R. E. Dennett, *Seven Years among the Fjort*, 1887, pp. 45–47; J. H. Bernan, *Missionary Labours in British Guiana*, 1847, p. 49; Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, ii (1913), 389. See many further references in *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed. pp. 48–57. The phenomenon is nearly universal.

plainly originated not only outside the priestly caste but outside the Jewish people;[1] and when its denial of any inference from disaster to moral guilt is later put forward by some interpolator of the Gospels, a subsequent interpolation explicitly stultifies the proposition.[2] The mass of the early Christians, like the orthodox Jews, would not face the dilemma.

In Greek literature before the period of discursive and dialectical philosophy we find an equally striking expression of the human protest against the injustice of the Gods. Such a protest would seem to have been familiar enough on the part of sufferers; but Æschylus in his PROMETHEUS BOUND, which may be of the same age as Job, sets forth an indictment of Zeus as a cruel tyrant, and offers no counter-plea, rhetorical or other. It is inferred from passages in the surviving play that in the lost sequel, PROMETHEUS UNBOUND, the God and the victim were in some way reconciled; but it is rather remarkable that the reconciliation play should have perished and the impeachment been preserved. The inferred reconciliation would appear to have been non-ethical;[3] and if the PROMETHEUS be one of the latest works of Æschylus we would seem led to infer that in his old age he had become much of a questioner as to theological ethics.

In the Persian religion, of which the prominent deities were Ormuzd and Ahriman, the problem is solved in a fashion which still appeals to many simple-minded and even to speculative religionists, where the Christian adaptation, so unsatisfactory to Man Friday,[4] has admittedly failed to hold its ground. The Persian solution was to posit or select two deities, one of Good and one of Evil, of whom the former was at a certain future date to overthrow the latter, as one king might overthrow another. It may not be unconnected with that effort, by whomsoever enforced, towards veracity in religious thought, that the Persians were known to the Greeks as teaching their youths 'to ride and speak the truth.' Truth-speaking, apart from the veto on false witness against the neighbour (which would be perjury), is not inculcated in either of the Hebrew decalogues.[5] But there is no further ground for

[1] The dogmatic denial of this by Bleek and Wellhausen (*Einleitung in das A. T.* § 268) is a mere ignoring of the obvious difficulties.

[2] Luke xiii, 1-5.

[3] Keble's attempt at a pious solution is very naïve. *Lectures on Poetry*, trans. i, 366 *sq.* Cp. *A Short History of Freethought*, 3d ed. i, 130 *sq.*

[4] *Robinson Crusoe.*

[5] Schopenhauer, in his criticism of Kant's system of substitutions for theological sanctions, points to the archaic "Du sollt (*sic*) nicht lügen" as an echo of the decalogue. Such a command does not occur in either decalogue; and the tale of Jacob and Esau indicates a stage in which, as in the Odyssey, skilful deceit is admired rather than reprobated. The ninth commandment forbids only calumny or perjury.

supposing that the dualistic answer to the problem of evil served to raise Persian morality above that of other nations about the same culture stage.

On the other hand, save in so far as the Yahwist cult latterly eliminated from Jewish religion old elements of religiously organized vice common to Asiatic cults, it produced no higher level of normal morality than that of the surrounding world; its gospel of racial murder outwent anything in pagan lore; and its intellectual ethic was so inferior to the Greek as to open the way for Greek influences in that and other fields. Though there were good moral minds among the Rabbis in the Roman period, the association of all moral sanctions with the shambles of the Temple could not conceivably tend to general moral betterment; and the spirit of 'particularism' was a standing bar to anything of the kind.

So obvious, indeed, are the moral failures of all religious systems when impartially or unsympathetically considered that no one system has ever admitted the moral success of another. As each denies the existence of the Gods of the others, so each, when it comes in critical contact with the others, impeaches their ethic and contemns their moral practice.

The most familiar illustration is the normal attitude of Christian propaganda towards the ethics of ancient paganism in the areas in which Christianity arose. A large part of the literature produced by the early Fathers is an unmeasured impeachment of the pagan religion in general as a positively immoral factor; and in that impeachment they cited the testimonies of many pagan writers. On that view, pagan religion in general was a demoralizing force; and it is hard to read Homer without partly taking some such view. Men made oath by a Zeus who is rather a mere arbitrary disposer of events than a Spirit of Righteousness, and who is himself, in his domestic relations, a mere licentious barbarian chief. Such parts of Homer as the fourteenth Iliad and the eighth Odyssey seem to be elaborations by hands that found a corrupt satisfaction in exhibiting the amours of the Gods. But all this had long before aroused the resentment of pagan thinkers, who refused to conceive of the Gods as the poets, embodying and embellishing ancient popular myths, portrayed them. The residual truth is that religious systems and codes are but crystallizations of a more or less popular ethic of the periods in which they are established and redacted, and, even if they begin as reformations, in due time form forces of resistance to new moral progress. Thus both critical pagan and partisan Christian affirm the moral failure

of the 'classic' pagan religion, the religion of the highest ancient civilization, and, à fortiori, the failure of the 'lower' systems. The Christian, for his part, claiming to have superseded another failure, the Jewish, claims also a unique moralizing power for his own system; and that system, in turn, we shall have to scrutinize. But already there is a presumption that only the uncritical adherent is likely to find in a creed which arose in the atmosphere of the others a moral success to which they could not attain.

> Some of the features which are held to possess special moralizing virtue in the Christian system are seen to have existed substantially in some which preceded it. The whole of the 'Sermon on the Mount,' the mere conventional naming of which so commonly passes for a vindication of Christian ethics, existed in previous Jewish lore, the main items being actually embodied in the Old Testament; and the old Egyptian ritual very prominently sets forth the moral obligation, not only of rectitude, but of compassion. There the soul, coming for judgment to the underworld, must, to find 'salvation,' be able to testify: I have given bread to him that was hungry, water to him that was thirsty, clothes to the naked, and shelter to the wanderer.[1]
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> A priestly inculcation of such charity seems to have been general in the Oriental civilizations; and any general betterment assumed to accrue to such teaching under Christianity must be inferred there also—unless it is claimed that in the latter case a special weight attaches to the source.

Such an issue leads to the fundamental problem: Can anything ever have been gained for ethics by representing natural and necessary moral principles as supernatural revelations? The rule called 'golden,' 'Do as you would be done by,' is certainly of universal vogue ever since human remonstrance could be made articulate: the difficulty has always been to get men habitually to apply it. It may then be argued that to give it out to an ignorant world as the enunciation of the Son of God is to give it a new power of penetration. But the very suggestion elicits the reminder that nowhere is the rule seen to be more utterly disregarded than in the immediate history of the recipients of this enunciation. And we are forced back to the question whether all theologizing of morals is not really a blunting of the moral appeal to all minds capable of receiving it in a truly moral sense, whatever may be the hypothetical effect on minds naturally ill-disposed. To put the concrete case: Is not the presentation of the Golden Rule as a divine saying a way

[1] Refs. in *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed. p. 392.

of blinding men to its fundamental and (under due reservations) indispensable nature? Is there, in short, any way to moralize men but to get them to realize the general law of reciprocity in themselves as they realize that fire burns and alcohol intoxicates?

"No good man," writes Seneca, a fervid theologian, "is without God." "A holy spirit dwells within us, supervisor and keeper of our goods and ills."[1] In the previous paragraph he had written of worshippers who pay the beadle to give them a place near the ears of the idol in order that their petitions to the God may be the better heard. Those worshippers, presumably, are they who most need moralizing; and their religion, whatever it be, has ostensibly failed to do it. From Seneca's point of view, it would appear, they need first to be religionized; but he has evidently no hope on that head. These, then, are morally unimprovable; and the good theist, it is equally obvious, is so prior (logically) to his theism, since Seneca always formulates the goods and evils for himself, and does but certificate the deity as sharing his views. More and more doubtful, then, becomes the moral efficacy of the theology.

Particularly difficult is it, after any due reflection, to conceive how the belief in the efficacy of either prayer or sacrifice can possibly have promoted morality. Sacrifice, in origin, is plainly on a level with the universal savage (and post-savage) practice of placating chiefs, potentates, or influential or official personages with gifts. When the priesthood inculcates the belief that the gifts are divinely commanded, and that their main object is to make amends for the sins of which the worshipper cannot but be conscious, or to give thanks for benefits received, the transaction may indeed be less perceptibly unethical or less expressive of a practically a-moral conception of the deity. It may also be that the priest who consumes the best of the sacrifice hypnotizes himself as to the morality of his procedure: many priests supplied with sacred books probably have done so; though there is abundant evidence as to the consciously fraudulent character of the operations of many savage 'medicine-men.'[2] It is true that, whereas Christians in general used confidently to impute 'priestcraft' to all religions but their own, many are now grown wary, seeing the possible implications and complications; and that even the competent Christian scholars who latterly ascribe a measure of intentional deceit to the Koran-making of Mohammed refrain from acknowledging the same factor in the composition of their own Sacred Books. But it

[1] Epist. xli.
[2] See *A Short History of Freethought*, 3rd ed. i, 27 *sq.* and refs.

remains practically inconceivable that the universal usage of sacrifice in antiquity went on without much consciousness of its moral worthlessness on the part of many priests, who were thus acting at a still lower ethical level than that of those who sacrificed in order to secure divine favour. And it is the less necessary to labour the point because by common consent the prophet who made the deity say "I desire mercy and not sacrifice"[1] was putting a much higher moral conception than that of the sacrificers, whatever may be thought of his pretence to be the mouthpiece of the deity. Pagans put the same protest without the same pretence.[2]

It is not too much to say that by the common consent of educated antiquity the usage of sacrifice substantially meant a non-moral appeal for divine favour; and the implication as to the lowering influence of religion on ethics is extensive. But, as the more thoughtful pagans saw, the same argument applies to prayer. So long as men really believed in its efficacy the majority would constantly resort to it as a means of promoting their advantage. And when it is contended that it was a religious spirit that inspired the recession, first from sacrifice to prayer, and next from prayer for worldly gain to prayer for spiritual aid or comfort, the answer is that we are considering the probable effect of religion on conduct in the mass, and that the recession in question really began as a condemnation of the religion of the majority by the minority.

The fact remains, too, that the express restriction of prayer in the Christian Gospels to one short formula has always been disobeyed in the Church; and that prayer for good weather, success in war, and 'special Providences' in general, remains customary to this day. Thus the ethical problem set up by theism—the question who is 'responsible' for human action which is declared to be foreseen and by implication foreordained by Omnipotence—is always officially evaded in an unethical fashion, even in an age in which misgivings on the subject have become more common than ever before. It would thus seem impossible to doubt that in the past the belief in the efficacy of prayer, like that in the efficacy of sacrifice, has tended against ethical improvement, however much prayer may have been practised by normally scrupulous people. It involves at once the conception of a deity who foreordains all things and who is yet capable of being deflected in his purposes—the latter

[1] Hosea, vi, 6. Cp. iv, 5; Isa. i, 11, 16.

[2] Persius, ii, 69; Horace, *Carm.* iii, 23, 17; Ovid, *Heroïdes, Acont. Cydipp.* 191–92; Sophocles, *Philoctetes*, 1441; Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, i. 6; Cicero, *Pro Cluentio*, 68; *Diodorus Siculus*, xii, 20. As to the revulsion against sacrifices in ancient India see *Short Hist. of Freethought*, i, 52.

dilemma being evaded only by positing his foreknowledge of all the prayers. Such an intellectual process suggests that there is something fundamentally unveridical in what is termed 'the religious temperament.'

In ethical discussion, the habit of laurelling "religion" in general, and Christianity in particular, has always had a vitiating effect, suppressing fact and suggesting fiction. Even in an admission by a competent theologian, writing on ethics, that religion adds no new class to the list of virtues, we find inserted a claim which will not bear historic investigation:—

> The religious aspect of virtue claims attention. It may seem, on a hasty survey, that religion adds a new class to the list of virtues. But this is a mistake. Virtue, so far as it is virtue, is moral. Religion glorifies it with a new general character, throws fresh light upon it, exalts it by tracing the good to its ultimate meaning, but does not swell the list by a new class of virtues. It is not meant, of course, that religion has never acted as a moral teacher. That would be a serious error. But when religion has made a new kind of character (*e.g.*, humility) lovely in the eyes of men, and so given it a place among the virtues, the result is, not the placing of a religious virtue over against the moral virtues, but the adding of one to the already recognized number of moral virtues. Religion is thus a moral teacher in the sense of awakening the human mind to perceive moral beauty where it was never perceived before, but not in the sense of inventing a class of virtues distinguished as religious rather than moral.
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> Religion has, however, a higher office with regard to virtue than that of being a moral teacher in the sense just explained. It presents virtue in a new light. To the religious man all virtue becomes piety, the habit of will which chooses the good as that which is, for the very highest reason, the best.[1]

If religion really opened men's eyes to a new kind of virtue, it would seem to do something more than 'present virtue in a new light.' As a matter of historic fact, the 'new light' is very apt to be one in which moral fitness ceases to be seen as such, and the 'very highest reason' darkens the spirit to the very nature and value of morality. Under that guidance has come into the world what we may define as religious sin. But the claim that is put as the less important, and is really the more important, is equally unjustifiable.

It is here explicitly claimed that "religion"—with the apparent implication of Christianity—taught "the human mind to perceive moral beauty where it was never perceived before." Now, it is obvious that a sense of the propriety of humility in relation to the Gods must have been common long before Christianity, being involved more or less in all ritual. But as a secular virtue it was definitely acclaimed and inculcated in China many centuries before the Christian era. The philosopher Lao-Tsze, writing in the sixth century B.C., cites "that *ancient* saying, 'He that humbles himself shall be preserved entire,'"

[1] C. F. D'Arcy, B.D., *A Short Study of Ethics*, 1895, p. 178.

adding "Oh, it is no vain saying!"[1] And this teaching, put as ancient, is again and again stressed in the small body of Lao-Tsze's work:—

> He who is self-displaying does not shine.
> He who is self-approving is not held in esteem.
> He who is self-praising has no merit.
> He who is self-exalting does not stand high.[2]
>
> I have three precious things which I hold fast and praise. The first is called compassion, the second is called economy, and the third is called humility.[3]

Whether or not Lao-Tsze was himself humble is another question: he has the Heraclitean touch of asperity; and there seems to have been no humility in his reception of Confucius. But there the teaching stands. And in the same age Confucius, teaching discursively where Lao-Tsze uttered gnomic sayings, puts the same principle in exactly the tone and temper in which it is put in the Christian gospel,[4] albeit Confucius does not figure as personally any more humble, in general, than Lao-Tsze. It is obvious that 'the beauty of humility' was there recognized apart from any religious conception; and, in point of fact, Confucius is commonly disparaged by Christian critics as having been lacking in the 'religious sense.'[5] It may perhaps be questioned whether the cult of 'the superior man,' on which the teaching is grafted, does not lean (as with Lao-Tsze) to 'the pride that apes humility'; but exactly the same question arises in regard to specifically religious professions of the 'virtue' in question. And whether or not the ingrained ceremonial of self-disparagement which pervades all Chinese life be the kind of thing that really represents humility, it is a standing testimony to the recognition of 'the beauty of humility' throughout a vast 'pagan' population during whole millenniums—whatever such a recognition may be worth. The attitude of both cultured and uncultured Chinamen in the past towards 'foreign devils' and 'barbarians' (which once elicited from a British envoy the description of a Chinese statesman as a 'presumptuous savage') may be a bad certificate of the efficacy of the ceremonial; but, again, exactly the same criticism applies to much professedly Christian humility in Christendom. The Christian dignitary who styles himself 'servant of servants' is hardly to be suspected of greater humility than that of a mandarin.

In this case the Christian assumption appears to be that there was no praise for humility in the 'classic' pagan world in which Christianity arose. But in the most pointed inculcation of it in the gospels (Lk. xiv, 7–11—a late parable, by the

[1] *The Speculations of Lao-Tsze*, by J. Chalmers, 1868, pp. 16–17. Cp. W. G. Old, *The Simple Way*, 1904, p. 60.
[2] Or "not daring to take precedence of the world." *Id.* No. lxvii.
[3] *Id.* No. xxiv.
[4] M. M. Dawson, *The Ethics of Confucius*, 1915, pp. 80, 84; Legge, *Life and Teachings of Confucius*, ed. 1875, pp. 95–98.
[5] Legge, as cited, pp. 99–100.

way) the appeal is expressly to a secular sense of the expediency of a modest behaviour in public; and the sanction is that "*thou shalt have glory* in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee." It will hardly be pretended that such a thought, whether or not it be reckoned 'religious,' can have been wholly strange in any civilized community in any era; though probably the 'virtue' is not much appreciated by savages or barbarians. Humility is, in fact, one of the *graces* of life, better so regarded than as a 'virtue' (though it certainly makes for virtue in many ways); and as such it is certainly better appreciated to-day in a wholly non-religious sense than it appears to be in the gospel parable. Even the beatitude "Blessed are the meek" is infirmed by the reward promised to accrue.

When the same theologian goes on[1] to assert that "Religion has another and more important office—it yields a standard of virtue.....The ideal of virtue is God Himself," we seem to be presented with a decisive rebuttal of the very claim made. In what theology is 'God Himself' conceived as practising humility or as being capable of it? And if humility be a virtue to be cultivated by the religious person, how is it to flourish on the conception that he is to seek to be like omnipotence in goodness, however 'remote and indefinable' that conception is avowed to be? The non-religious Chinese sage would appear to have had the more rational notion of ethics, both in theory and in practice. And if general clearness of vision as to what is 'good' in private and public conduct be any criterion of an ethical basis, the moralists of ancient China must be rated at least as high as any in antiquity, theistic or otherwise. It would be no ill discipline to add the study of their ethic to that of classic antiquity in our own universities.

As a matter of fact, the precept of universal love was never in antiquity, so far as we know, more systematically inculcated than by the Chinese philosopher Mih-Teih or Meh-Ti,[2] unless it may be held to have been so in the doctrine of Buddhism. In both of these cases the inculcation was non-theological. If the question be, then, as to whether theology adds either zest or insight to the perception of the principle of reciprocity or mutual love, the evidence is to the contrary; and if it be as to which mode of inculcation of the given ethic is the more efficacious, it would certainly be difficult to show that Christendom in the ages of faith presented a larger measure of mutual good-will than did the Buddhist populations of the East. The simple facts that Buddhism is of all quasi-religious systems apart from Christianity that which has most arrested

[1] Work cited, p. 179.

[2] See below, pt. ii, ch. iii.

attention, and that, whatever alien elements accrued, it is primarily atheological, tell somewhat strongly against any assumption of a special moral value in theological ethics.

On any view, there is plainly no content, logical, ethical, or philosophical, in the formula that the ideal of virtue is God, when the idea of God admittedly varies with every believer, being, in fact, the mere apotheosis of the believer's notion of power and goodness. If it be argued that he can always imagine a God better than himself, and so hold up to himself a high standard, the answer is that he can equally imagine a man better than himself; and that there is more practical chance of result, as well as more philosophic sanity, in setting up a more or less attainable ideal for imitation than in sketching one primarily conceived as inimitable. The alleged gain from the professed following even of the gospel Jesus as a model[1] is far outweighed by the implicit assumption that the model is supernatural. Such ideal figures are inevitably and progressively out of relation to the life of most human beings. But the logical point of importance is that they *are* simple projections of some men's notions of excellence, even as is the idea of God.

When, however, forward-looking men begin to seek systematically for a better moral light than religious systems yield, as they did in Greece in the age of Socrates, and have done in Europe since the Renaissance, they usually cling for a time to the abstract notion of deity as a moral foothold, either for their own thought or for that of the multitude whom they hope to influence. The deists of the eighteenth century seem in general to have had no hesitation in ascribing moral purpose to deity, and in regarding their own moral natures as part of the divine scheme. Only gradually did debate make clear the fact that the moral character ascribed to deity is but the ascription to him of an ethic determined by the believer in advance; that, 'revelation' being dismissed as a figment, embodying much ancient immorality, such rejection implied ultimate renunciation of the attempt to represent in any way the power supposed to be behind the cosmos; and that a coherent and intelligible theory and system of morality are to be found, if at all, only in a vigilant study of the nature of things, human nature in particular.

It has thus come about that all expert discussion of ethics, however theologically coloured, now renounces theological *premises*, and is in fact substantially naturalistic. Skilful attempts have indeed been made by highly accomplished thinkers[2] (1) to discredit

[1] Work cited, p. 179, *note*.
[2] See the *Naturalism and Ethics* of Professor W. R. Sorley, 1885.

'Naturalism' by making it mean an attempted extraction of ethical rules solely from a study of the past course of nature, and (2) to set up an antithesis between 'Naturalism' and a 'Rationalism' which, proceeding on the lines of Kant, claims to reach higher moral conceptions. But this antithesis is logically untenable. The true antithesis of Naturalism is just Supernaturalism; and even an imperfect Naturalism which appeals to reason is rationalistic. Hobbes, the outstanding founder of modern naturalistic ethics, constantly affirms that the Laws of Nature are the deductions of reason. It is only an imperfect naturalism that can stop short of any truth really attainable and demonstrable by reason; and the very idea of upward evolution in nature, which is the modern as opposed to the prevailing ancient idea of the Cosmos, presupposes new progress in ethical thought and practice alike. Naturalism is emphatically Rationalism, whatever errors professed Naturalists may commit.

Once supernaturalism is abandoned, as it is in effect by reasoners who substitute for it a professed rationalism as a concept, the issue in ethics lies between different lines of reasoning, all alike appealing to universal logic, with no resort to any form of 'revelation' that defies it. The formula of 'revelatory thought' recently put forward as salving the historic idea of revelation[1] is a nugatory compromise. All new and true thought is *ipso facto* revelatory; whereas 'revelation' has always been the fortress of resistance to new and true thought. Once reason is accepted as the tribunal in ethics, the philosophic question is simply as to which line of reasoning tells the whole truth so far attainable.

But long after the presuppositions of theology have disappeared in their dogmatic form the bias or bent of mind which went with them continues to affect men's attitude towards ethical problems. The God-idea may be said to have survived in virtue, partly, of men's wish at once to dignify and to regulate life in times of predominant wrong. To predicate a Just Ruler who would one day rectify things and punish the wronger was as spontaneous a solace as that of predictions like

Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor,

which bring comfort to wronged or indignant men. And that clinging to a doctrine of retribution or rectification, a promise of the drying of tears in another world, or a philosopheme which cancels evil in terms of pantheism, is seen to survive in the formulas of

[1] See the article "The Roots of Faith," by the Rev. Prof. D. S. Cairns, in *Contemporary Review*, June, 1918, p. 650.

accomplished philosophers who know better than to found upon sacred books. It seems to inspire the announcement of Dr. F. H. Bradley that "a result, if it fails to satisfy our whole nature, comes short of perfection"; and that he "could not rest tranquilly in a truth" if he were "compelled to regard it as hateful."[1] The very language here hints of equivoque, since 'perfection' is ambiguous, and obviously no one could be described as 'tranquil' over what he regarded as hateful. The drift of the diction reveals the drift of the thought towards rejection of a given conclusion, not as being illogical (in which case it is already cancelled), but as being unpleasurable; and this attitude, it will be found, is approved of by many who profess to reject all ethic that founds on pleasure as the end of action.

It would seem to be the same instinctive craving for a comfortable account of the universe that underlies the summary of a very competent historian of ethics, to the effect, first, that "the idea of objective human good contains.....an irrational element," and, secondly, that there is therefore great value in the doctrine of the Rational Realists as to the "unity of self-conscious reason," without which "the irrational element in ethics cannot be removed."[2] It will be found extremely difficult to discover behind this skilful terminology anything but a yearning to put a comfortable face on things. To affirm an 'irrational element *in ethics*' is either merely to charge confusion of thought or statement on ethical writers, and by implication to call for a correction, or to avow that the universe appears to be not so constituted as to go right. If, as would seem probable, the latter is the meaning, the trouble is hardly to be cured by alleging 'the unity of self-conscious reason' in any of the numerous senses in which that cryptic expression is to be understood; and it is hard to believe, in the light of grim experience, that there can be any gain to conduct from putting such formulas in currency. As consolations whispered in the ear of the Infinite they appeal only to the sense of humour.

Whatever be the psychosis of such substitutions for the formulas of theology, it is very clear that no God-idea whatever can *add* anything to our resources in grappling with the problem of evil. At the best it is made by the ethic which professes to found on it. The God-idea being necessarily a human construction, 'the Brocken-Phantom of Self projected on the mists of the Non-Ego,' it matters

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, 3rd ed. p. 148. Cp. A. Hodder, *The Adversaries of the Sceptic*, 1901, p. 12 *sq.*

[2] R. A. P. Rogers, *A Short History of Ethics*, 1911, pref. pp. vi–viii.

not for the purposes of ethics (save in respect of the moral conceptions embodied in the practical doctrine) how the given Deity is supposed to relate to human conduct, or how his existence or character is supposed to be made out. No ethic whatever can be justified to the intelligence merely by saying that the theorist infers the agreement of Deity with his views of right and wrong. That method indeed could conceivably be made dangerous in the last degree to morality, by arguing either *(a)* that, *because* Omnipotence must have intended things to happen as they do, the last word is with our own preferences, which are God-given; and that it is useless to hope to modify the preferences which are seen or held to be anti-social; or *(b)* that an instinct on our part to destroy those who do not share our opinions may be regarded as equally God-implanted with the instinct of self-preservation. The first of these possibilities of argument may be regarded as wholly imaginary; and indeed it is not met with as a considered proposition; but the second is an actual development of theology. The God-idea, then, can operate for evil. In any case it is man-made, an item in the edifice of his ethics, not an objective truth on which he builds. It remains, then, to study the structure for what it is.

Chapter III

POLITICAL ETHICS

Cities [*civitates*], by convention the starting-point of 'civilization,' must early have set up expansions and adjustments in ethics. Their inhabitants, being no longer mere tribes, had to widen the law of reciprocity; and the multitude of occupations which they fostered, and were fostered by, gave occasion for much expansion of law, defining in detail the deductions of natural justice and so far educating moral judgment. Thus arose codes of law, administered by official judges, of whom some would carry reflection much further than would the barbarian chief. Peaceful and sedentary life, permitting relative refinement of feeling, would in certain regards educe mercy and sympathy, even if at the same time it multiplied opportunities of strife, fraud, and vice. In the medley there would be 'moral progress,' in respect of a positive enlargement of the moral sense among the morally educable, by way of widened thinking. For the moral judgment, like the muscles, must grow with using, up to its structural limits.

As always, however, the new good is twinned with new evil. If we can assume that habitual infanticide had slackened in the pastoral and agricultural stages by reason of the more regular food supply (and even this would hold only for the better-placed populations), we still cannot doubt that the economic pressure fatally revived in the town stage, and that infanticide was as normal in the ancient cities as it is in Chinese cities to-day. Socrates (the son of a midwife) is made in Plato's dialogue Theaetetus (149, 151) to speak of the putting-away of new-born infants as he might of the drowning of kittens; and we shall see that the leading moralists of Athens, taking it for granted that every Greek City-State must have its population limited, saw in normal infanticide nothing shameful or terrible. In was, in fact, held to be necessary to the public welfare, and was thus as 'moral' as any other usage.

On the other hand, cities fulfilled the fatality of antagonism as groups and tribes had done. Leagues were apparently rare and precarious; and in due course cities were subdued and embodied in monarchies by chiefs or kings wielding military force. Thus the

area of reciprocities was forcibly widened, cities formerly at enmity being compelled to peaceful relationship; and the widened possibility of peaceful life within a large State meant so far further possibilities of the life of reflection,[1] as of art and industry, as also, once more, of fraud, crime, and vice. Growing civilization bore with it its growing burden of evil—evil often methodized as it could not have been under barbarism.

For the rest, the codes of large States were but expansions of the codes of cities; and as the large States in turn remained on the old footing of chronic antagonism to each other, ethic as between nations was often even more savage than it had been between cities, the greater power working the greater destruction. Morality as between States was but fitfully existent, as the fall of many empires proves. The moral progress made under them was limited to the relations of men within the individual body politic. But it was noteworthy.

When a definite political system is established, with specific powers of legislation and compulsion as distinguished from the simpler tribal system of custom and consent, or that of individual decisions by chiefs acting as judges, it becomes so far a new factor in morals. Normally seeking religious sanctions as a matter of course, it sets up taboos and obligations for other than religious reasons. The kind of conduct required to sustain the political system is substantially different from that required to sustain the priesthood and the cult. Each seeks its own utilities, as they are seen for the time being; and each appeals to the general sense of utility in its own way. Where the priesthood says: 'Do this and avoid that to avert the wrath of the Gods and the mischief wrought by evil spirits,' the political law-maker says: 'Do this to safeguard the polity.' Where the polity is purely monarchic, the process normally includes the attaching of religious sanctity to the king, and by consequence to his commands. This holds good from the primary stage of the first king or *rex sacrificulus*, through ancient emperors and medieval kings by divine right, down to the Czardom of Russia. It involves the early legal gain that an offence against a fellow-subject is an offence against the king, who punishes accordingly, thus protecting those who cannot avenge themselves. But this seems to be a late development. Where in the early stage the king has become so on the religious side, often wielding his power on condition of ultimately dying as a sacrifice, there is an

[1] Thus the main progress made by Judaism towards an 'ethical monotheism,' so-called, was made in the Captivity or under Persian influence.

inevitable movement on his part to shift his penalty and retain sacrosanct power. Where he becomes king on the military side, he seeks to add sacrosanctity to his command of military power. In Egypt and imperial China, Persia and Rome, the expedient becomes a system. In England the principle is adopted on Christian grounds as early as King Alfred.[1]

Apart from improvements in administration, the duties and obligations imposed by political systems are but extensions of those primordially laid by tribal custom[2] and priestly code. Military service would be a primordial duty, recognized by all as a matter of course. Chiefs and senates would but organize it. Priestly revenue, typified by the tithe, becomes the model of State or royal revenue. Thus far, there is no great extension of the forms of moral thought. The notion of utility, always underlying tribal and priestly taboos, is equally founded on by the State. The canonical Hebrew decalogue, as developed by priests on a basis of primary vetoes,[3] invokes utility as the tribal elders must have done from the remotest antiquity. "Honour thy father and thy mother, *that thy days may be long in the land* which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The political ruler or State could make a still more weighty appeal in so far as it made levies of men or goods for the service of the State; though the levies of the king for his personal establishment needed all that religious sanction could do to make them acceptable. Their acceptance, in fact, was best established by conquest and the simple law of force.

It is when the polity developes civil law that it begins to develop the moral sense. Everywhere the moral sanction crystallizes first in terms of custom. 'That which has ever been,' whether in taboo or in regulation of rights, is the early formula of the moral sense on the public side.[4] In English mediæval history we constantly find past custom set up as the standard of right by those who complain of being unjustly or oppressively governed. But as society grew, priests and elders and kings alike found themselves faced by the necessity of making new customs, in the interest of public peace; and to this end not merely old custom but very strong moral instincts had to be overruled.

Much dispute has taken place in modern ethical systems over

[1] Maine, *Ancient Law*, end.

[2] "In the primitive law of almost all the races which have peopled Western Europe there are vestiges of the archaic notion that the punishment of crimes belongs to the general assemby of freemen." Maine, *Ancient Law*, 9th ed. p. 396.

[3] Above, pp. 73–75.

[4] Thus we find as to ancient Irish law that "the law is purely customary, and theoretically incapable of alteration." Prof. R. R. Cherry, *Lectures on the Growth of Crim. Law*, 1890, p. 22.

the question as to whether or how far moral ideas and ideals are strictly à priori, in any of the senses, psychological or metaphysical, borne by that term. The analysis of them will be our task at a later stage; but some dialectic may be saved by taking up, so far, the simple position of Shaftesbury and Hume, that the *basis* or *root* of morals is a sentiment, a bias, a propensity, rooting in life conditions, not an act of critical reason, though that is the instrument of all rectification of bias. Other shapes of the conception of the à priori will have to be dealt with as they are found arising in ethical systems; but there is so far no fundamental difference of standpoint between 'transcendental' or religious and naturalist ethics. No one has more definitely affirmed and applied the 'intuitional' view of primary moral judgment (as a psychological fact) than the 'irreligious' and naturalistic Hume.

But the naturalists who have seen the intuitional *basis* of moral opinions in general have left much room for cavil, and for erroneous modifications of their own position, by not recognizing the intuitional or à priori character not only of recognizably anti-moral bias, but of many quasi-moral judgments now discredited which long had as absolute general authority as any other. There is no good reason for doubting, to begin with, that the early framers of taboos had as clear a conviction of the absolute validity of their opinions as any transcendental philosopher can have as to his. And if there be any doubt as to this, there can be none as to the fact that the right of retaliation emerges as an absolute and spontaneous conviction, an à priori moral certainty, modified or overruled only by some other conviction, whether spontaneous or acquired, as that of the duty of non-retaliation against parents or chiefs. And the à priori right of revenge was one of the cruces of early political ethics.

Equally certain is it that early political ethics, faced by the social dangers involved in habitual blood feuds, could find only in the test of utility a basis for a moral control of the à priori right. In early ages, as in later, there were doubtless non-revengeful individuals who would counsel forgiveness to others. But forgiveness in respect of serious injuries, outside the rule of the parent or the chief, would certainly be in general regarded as cowardice; and the positive duty of revenge of an injury to the family—as the murder of a kinsman—is one of the strongest of early moral conceptions, taking on at once religious and moral sanctions. Sheer tribal custom, rooting in group instinct, had given it unquestioned sway. On that footing, undying feuds, endless sequences of murder, are the outcome of the strongest play of the à priori moral sense; and

every polity that hoped to prosper was concerned to put a restraint on the process. The motive was its social deadliness; the guide to corrective action was the clear perception of utilities.

In the Hebrew code we see the recognized tribal duty of the 'avenger of blood' politically controlled, or sought to be controlled, by the institution of 'cities of refuge'—prototypes of the medieval Christian 'sanctuary' for fugitives from legal justice. This was presumably a priestly device. How it operated we cannot tell; but it is likely enough that, once established, the conception of 'sanctuary' found an acceptance only less absolute than the sense of the rightness and duty of revenge. In other barbarous or semi-barbarous societies we find regulation taking the form of a usage or political law of fixed penalty or compensation. Here the beginnings of regulation can in some cases be historically traced to the voluntary action of public-spirited persons who persuade wronged relatives to accept solatium. In early England we find King Alfred making it compulsory to put a claim for compensation before resorting to vengeance.[1]

In other ancient communities regulation is merely a setting of bounds to retaliation. Thus in the pseudo-Mosaic code we have the standing principle of a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.[2] Both this and the plan of compensation may be regarded as a result at once of à priori moral reasoning and of regulative utilitarianism, the strict reciprocity being satisfactory to a comparatively reflective sense of justice, where the more 'natural' man would feel perfectly 'justified' in taking a life for an eye, or even for a tooth. But this measure of reciprocity in revenge might very well emerge as an 'intuition,' equally with the 'sentiment' of the non-revengeful man who spontaneously felt the beauty of forgiveness.

Either way it is certain that only institutional law, priestly or political, could set up a general control of the instinct of revenge, in communities where the practice was ingrained, by securing for the legal penalty, whatever it was, the social sanction originally given to the act of individual vengeance.[3] All that has ever taken place in general morals with regard to revenge is this substitution. The

[1] Cp. Cherry, as cited, p. 81.

[2] "There is no reference to arbitration, and no trace of its existence, so far as I am aware, in the Hebrew law." *Id.* p. 48.

[3] In England private revenge was normal long after the Norman Conquest. Only in 1267 did it become a finable offence to 'take the law in one's own hands' (Cherry, as cited, p. 85). It would appear that this enactment, part of the Statute of Marlborough (passed in the first Parliament of Henry III after his civil war), represents lay and not regal ideas of reform, as it chiefly consists of the Provisions of Westminster, exacted from Henry in 1259 (Maitland, *Const. Hist.* 1909, p. 17).

primordial instinct of retaliation is renounced only as regards the infliction of physical or financial or other 'damage,' and not always in those regards: the justice of moral retaliation, *in words*, is never denied, however often it may be deprecated or belittled; and there can be few who do not take some satisfaction in seeing such retaliation skilfully inflicted for a moral aggression, thus attesting the à priori character of the right of physical revenge, which for most of us, certainly not for all, has been gradually overridden by the ethic of public justice.

No reasonable antagonist of so-called 'utilitarianism' probably will dispute that in this case the utilitarian test played an essential part in the shaping of the codes by which the mass of mankind has lived. Such a regulation could never be accomplished by any command to love and forgive, however certificated. In the early code of the Lowland Scots, as preserved in a later translation, it is affirmed that "All laws outhir [either] ar manis law or Goddis law. Be the law of Gode a heid [head] for a heid, a hand for a hand, an e [eye] for an e, a fut for a fut. Be the law of man, for the lyf of a man ix^{xx} ky [nine-score cattle]. For a fut a merk, for a hand als mekill [as much], for an e half a merk, for ane er [ear] als mekill, for a tuth xii peniis, for ilk [each] inch of lynth of the wound xii peniis, for ilk inch of bred [breadth] of the wound xii peniis."[1] Here the legislator makes bold to set the secular against the divine prescript, strong in his sense of public utility; but he makes the venture on the strong ground of his knowledge that the 'ky' will in the long run be found to be an adequate sanction, as against even the hereditary ethic of revenge.

The utilitarian motive, thus seen to operate successfully against an à priori moral conviction rooted in organic bias, is also seen to be strictly limited by the existing power of critical reflection. The evil of blood feuds was plain to all the more thoughtful minds. But another social evil, emerging in the agricultural stage, being cognized as a form of property and a means of wealth and convenience to individuals, was no more countervailed by early law, down to and within the historic period, than by the ordinary moral sense. The right to enslave was taken to be as much a matter of course as the right to slay in battle or the right to exact blood vengeance before the law controlled it. And State law equally took the right to enslave as a matter of course, enforcing the owner's right, and only partially regulating it by the standards of average humanity. Only

[1] *Fragmenta veterum Legum*, in the Scots Acts, i, 375; cited by Burton, *History of Scotland*, ii, 64.

in civilized Greece, in the age of Plato and Aristotle, did humane and thoughtful men begin to challenge the whole institution of slavery; and neither Plato nor Aristotle was found ready to apply to it adequate tests either of utility or of à priori moral reason. Thus slavery remained 'moral' till far down in the Christian period in Europe, and still later elsewhere.

At this stage we must prepare to face the challenge that law and morals are different things; that obedience to law is not as such a moral act but merely a prudential one; and that morality consists in the doing of an action solely because it is felt to be right. Nay, we shall even have to face the challenge of the ethic which denies that any action is 'truly' moral that does not proceed from a benevolent emotion, something beyond or prior to any sense of reciprocal duty or justice. And the first step in the discussion is to ask the challenger whether he denies that the barbarian who put aside all other tasks in order to revenge his slain kinsman was acting upon an emotion that was benevolent as regarded his own kin? It seems difficult to doubt this: the slain kinsman must often have been personally unpopular, while his slayer may have been personally liked even by the revenger. Was not his act, then, 'truly' moral, or does it require the characteristic of kindness in the act itself to make it so? And, if so, is every act of kindness, kindly done, unquestionably moral? Supposing, for instance, a savage murderer, fleeing from pursuit and collapsing from fatigue, is seen and succoured by an alien tribesman out of pure spontaneous sympathy, to the extent of enabling him to escape, does that action necessarily rank as truly moral?

The difficulties thus indicated may be sufficient to induce the student to give at least a provisional assent to the definition which makes the word 'moral' cover, though it is not limited to, all serious assent to public law and all action taken in terms of such assent, even where it can be reasonably argued that the law is faulty and the assent blind. For such assent has the main characters of what is commonly regarded as moral devotion to duty; and it is historically demonstrable that such assent was the normal form of the moral sense in the ages before men began to debate logically on the nature of the Good, the Right, and the Wrong.

Slavery, the Christian should remember, is accepted as moral in the New Testament, not only by implication in numerous uses of the word 'slave' (falsely translated 'servant') but in special endorsements of slavery in the gospels (Luke, xvii, 7) and in the Pauline Epistles (*e.g.* 1 Cor. vii, 21; Colos. iii, 22), though in the first of

these latter passages the fact is wilfully obscured by the evasive rendering 'use it rather,' and in the second by the mistranslation 'servants.'

A fresh problem arises when we face anew the question, raised for us very early by the phenomena of irrational savage taboos, as to the distinction between law and right when law is seen or held to be wrong. It is raised in respect of plainly inequitable laws in early codes, and no less in respect of the disparities of the laws of different peoples. The difficulty here is equally great for those who point to law as generating the idea of justice and those who point to a 'natural' and universal perception of right and wrong—a proposition which speedily collapses in the meaningless formula that all peoples or persons think some things right and some things wrong. It is well to face that issue also at this stage.

The notion of justice grows and changes with the growth of sympathy. It is demonstrably wrong to say with J. S. Mill, who here follows Hobbes, that "law is the *idée mère* of justice."[1] A primary sense of justice and of injustice is quasi-organic; and it is in terms of their varying notions of justice that men have always made and remade their laws. But the effective operation of laws has always had a great influence in shaping, directing, and reinforcing or perverting men's moral opinions and 'moral sense.'

The historic and the psychological truth would seem to be that an overriding of the primitive sense of justice as to practices long 'sanctioned' by tribal custom began to be effected when such a usage as blood-revenge was brought under restraint. Such an overriding doubtless took place in other relations, when chiefs or elders imposed restraints on usages formerly recognized; but the restraint of blood-feud may be taken as the typical instance, being the most remarkable. In that case 'law' would begin to figure as a contradiction of 'justice' as previously understood; and when the conflict substantially ended in favour of law the ordinary sense of justice would in the terms of the case have taken a new ply, the 'legal' acquiring the sanction formerly attaching to the customary. But this clearly does not amount to saying that law is the *idée mère* of justice. What has happened is a complication of an idea of justice rooting in the primary self-asserting instincts of the human being.[2]

And such conflicts and complications must early have elicited a challenge which in one way goes deeper than the challenge to discriminate between a 'moral' and a merely law-abiding attitude.

[1] *Utilitarianism*, 7th ed. p. 70.
[2] On the whole problem see the able discussion by Edith Simcox in *Natural Law: An Essay in Ethics*, 1877, section ii.

The immense variety in the laws, usages, sanctities, and 'principles' of different tribes and peoples must early have suggested to many that there is no principle in the matter *but* law or usage. This view, which we find ascribed to Protagoras among the Greeks, and is met with in modern times, must have arisen long before the time of Socrates and been duly debated. It would be met in practice, at least on the part of the more thoughtful, by the practical answer (1) that all laws are made either in the supposed interest of the community by its leaders and elders or by the conqueror or tyrant in the interest of his polity; (2) that in regard of both kinds of law there were chronic reforms and reconstructions; (3) that the more enduring systems, or parts of systems, were those which best maintained the social equilibrium; and (4) that every dispute and every readjustment testified to a general conviction that there were *some* principles involved in the nature of things, which could be to some extent settled; while there was hope that agreement could be come to on others.

This would be the naturalistic and utilitarian answer; and any other—any blind defence of law as law, or of ancient custom as such—would only tend to confirm the doubters in disbelief and so to promote a really anti-moral temper and practice. Men would resolve to 'fight for their own hand' in a world where law was plainly arbitrary and moral convictions were in conflict. On the other hand, many morally scrupulous men would throw in their lot with the laws, preferring (especially in free communities) the simple affirmation and support of the principle of public legislation to a perpetual moral dispute. But the dispute could not so be evaded. It has gone on ever since, and is posited for us in our own day in propositions which call for critical rebuttal. One of the most competent statements is that of Bain, who thus adapts a doctrine of Hobbes:—

> Government, Authority, Law, Obligation, Punishment, are all implicated in the same great institution of Society, to which Morality owes its chief foundation and the Moral Sentiment its special attributes. Morality is not Prudence, nor Benevolence, in their primitive and spontaneous manifestations; it is the systematic codification of prudential and benevolent actions [? motives] rendered obligatory by what is termed penalties or Punishment; an entirely distinct motive, artificially framed by human society, but made so familiar to every member of society as to be a second nature. None are allowed to be prudential or sympathetic in their own way.[1]

[1] *Mental and Moral Science*, 1868, p. 455.

It might seem to have been by oversight that this careful thinker has here in effect limited the scope of morality to actions enforced by law under penalties—a proposition which, in earlier forms, was met by both Kant and Schopenhauer with the retort that action motived by mere law and penalty is not moral at all. But when Bain goes on to affirm explicitly that "A moral act is not merely an act tending to reconcile the good of the agent with the good of the whole society: it is an act prescribed by the social authority, and rendered obligatory upon every citizen," he definitely forces dissent. Here we have the contrary challenge to that of the idealist, before considered; and the reply is much simpler. An act of pure benevolence, as that of the Good Samaritan, a sympathetic countenance to one in disgrace, an act of self-sacrifice on behalf of another, the building of a hospital, an educative campaign for the repeal of a law held to be bad—no one of these actions is "commanded by the social authority"; yet who will deny that any one of them is or may be a truly moral act? The publication of the work *J'Accuse* in 1915 by a German was bitterly resented by the German Social Authority and by the mass of German public opinion; by most people elsewhere it was reckoned the most moral action standing to any German's credit during the War.

It is essential to make a stand against this extension, by a logical leap, of the *fact* that Law has played a great part in forming moral opinion to the affirmation that Law is absolutely co-extensive *in principle* with Morality. *Non sequitur.* It is quite true, as Bain urges, that "a bad law is still a law," and so may be obeyed with a moral intention; but when he adds that "an ill-judged moral precept is still a moral precept, *felt as such by every loyal citizen,*" he commits another unwonted confusion of ideas. "Felt as such" might mean different things; but the context ostensibly implies that a moral precept felt to be ill-judged is still obeyed by every loyal citizen, which clearly cannot be true save on the definition of 'loyal' is 'absolutely law-obeying'—a definition which makes the argument a 'circle.' The reasoning has collapsed formally as well as logically.

So singular a divagation by a worker so noted for his caution and vigilance is one more proof of the perpetual need for reconsideration in ethics as in every other field of human thought. Granted that obedience to law is moral, it is not true that all laws have been framed with a moralizing purpose. Even in the modern past many have been framed in religious and racial malice; and to resist such laws is, so to speak, a more moral act than to

obey them. Even of laws planned with an honest concern for justice, or in the belief that they did not infringe the principles of justice, multitudes have been repealed as unjust or inexpedient. In modern times the whole body of law is under continuous revision: it is precisely in that respect that the moral sense of the modern world proves its superiority to that of antiquity and the Middle Ages—though, in point of fact, then also laws were chronically modified and superseded.

It is only to the imperfectly moral, certainly a large mass, that punitive law in general latterly gives a lead; its parts are constantly being reformed, or at least altered, on the urging of minds which are or are thought to be more moral than those who first framed them. To say then, as does Bain, with reiteration, that the morality of an action "is constituted by its authoritative prescription, and not by fulfilling the primary ends of the social institution," is to make a grave ethical mistake, which when made by Hobbes was the result of a terrible social dilemma, but which should not now cumber the ground. If law gives the status of morality to a bad action, it cannot also cancel the morality which resists that action. The law which prescribed the burning of heretics was certainly framed with the idea of safeguarding social welfare, but it remains a monument of the power of religion and law to pervert moral judgment. Those who applied it or acquiesced in it were made morally worse in a vital human relation, being on that point reduced to the level of Polynesians enforcing an insane and sanguinary taboo. An utterly delusive notion of utility blinded all concerned to the real human utilities; and the à priori character of the conviction proceeded upon is only another proof that it does not matter one straw, as to the truth of a notion, whether it is à priori or not. There are at least as many à priori errors as truths.

The only explanation of Bain's position that makes it ethically intelligible is the inferable conception that individual divergence from law may easily be wrong or unjustifiable, even if done on personal conviction of its rightness, and that thus the danger of resistance to law in general is greater than the chance of its being beneficial. It might indeed be argued that the word 'moral,' construed by its etymology, signifies merely 'legally customary'; but that cannot be the solution here. It would be the merest truism to say that a departure from the legally customary is not legally customary. The explanation, if there be any that is reasonably satisfactory, must be that above given. And it is true that all deviation from legal prescription or current *mores* incurs risk of

wrong-doing. When benevolently planned 'reforming' laws have themselves frequently to be repealed as being found harmful, the individual 'reformer' may well be astray. But that cannot justify Bain's proposition that a moral action is as such constituted by, and therefore dependent for its morality on, the prescription of the constituted authority, unless we are to define morality as something quite different from rightness, and to reduce the idea of it to simple equivalence with that of law.

In terms of Bain's position, not only were heretic-burning and slavery made moral by legal prescription, but to enable the heretic or the slave to escape was either a non-moral or a positively immoral action. Against such a doctrine, not only the healthy untutored, but the instructed moral sense, will always invincibly revolt. Bain himself, I take it, would have abetted the escape of a fugitive slave in the United States had he been there and met the opportunity while slavery was 'the law of the land.' While it was legal in the States, it was illegal in Engand. An ethic which makes obedience to both laws equally moral, and resistance to or evasion of them equally immoral, reduces itself to a mere affirmation of the duty or morality of obeying all laws within their national sphere, and turns the rational problem of ethics out of doors. The man who either resists or denounces a law as bad takes his moral risks; but he is to be judged among rational men on the moral merits, as seen in the light of the moral reason by which all laws are to be tested. And when, as so often happens, the protest leads to the repeal of the law as now recognizably bad, it is an unwarrantable abuse of language to say that the protest was not 'moral' or within the scope of 'morality' until the law was repealed. The moral impulse which is continuously moralizing law cannot rationally be classed as outside of 'morality.' Bain's thesis ignores the salient historic fact, of which he is elsewhere fully conscious, that morality is progressive.

Yet the normal presumption in favour of either the rightness of all law or the rightness of deferring or submitting to it is so deeply rooted in usage that not a few distinguished moralists have more or less coincided with the view so surprisingly re-formulated by Bain. Hobbes's point of arbitrary conflict with right reason was his dogmatic assertion that there can be no justice or injustice save in regard to constituted law—a thesis according to which captainless shipwrecked sailors on a desert island could not rationally feel or say that any of them did a just or an unjust thing until they had framed a code of laws, and even then could not say it when an

emergency arose for which the law gave no prescription, though it was precisely their notion of justice that would shape any law they made. That was Hobbes's wilful response to the urging of his distress under civil commotion and his resentment of the self-willed turbulence of fanatical Puritans, who thought they held all moral law in their consciences and their Bibles.

Yet again, we shall find Hegel (in his somewhat similar recoil from Kant's blank affirmation of the 'categorical imperative' to do as you would be done by, as the sufficient guide of all conduct) dogmatizing as did Hobbes, and affirming that the law of the land was to be revered as the highest expression of universal spirit. And in our own time the most distinguished of living English philosophers has affirmed that "to wish to be better than the world is to be already on the threshold of immorality."[1] Considering that all of us are at all times very truly "on the threshold of immorality," the wording is lax; but the intention seems clear. And there is, as aforesaid, an element of truth behind the menace. That element was much more guardedly expressed long ago by William Smith, the theistic rationalist and naturalist, in his DISCOURSE OF ETHICS, thus:—

> He who should take his conscience altogether from the keeping of society would place it in a perilous position. His proud independence might operate for evil, as well as for good. There is a limit to the boldness of virtue, and just on the other side of the boundary lies the madness of crime.[2]

To this all men may assent. To find oneself at all points, or even at very many, at serious odds with the ethic of ordinarily good people would be to find good ground for doubting one's own moral sanity. Happily the experience is very rare among sane men; at least, I can recall no record of it. But to "wish to be better than the world" is not, in a rational interpretation, to propose to transcend current morality at all points. It is, practically speaking, to wish to improve on the current legalities either by way of tightening or loosening them, and to be in reasonable expectation of the approval or assent of many or some reasonable people. Certainly a law that is "better than the world" in any large or serious sense is good for little; though a law, to be of any use at all, had need be better than a considerable part of the world. But moral progress has been, and will be always, made either by way of the wish of morally sensitive people to be better than the bulk of

[1] Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, 1867, p. 180. It is to be noted that this book has never been reprinted by its author, and may therefore not at all points represent his matured views.
[2] Work cited, p. 23.

the world, or by the assent of the world to the simple reclamation of reasonable rights by some of its sections who had hitherto been denied them.

We have only to remember that the so-called golden rule has been widely current in the world for many thousands of years, with a general profession of acceptance, but with a very imperfect fulfilment of its behest, in order to realize that any one who takes ethics seriously must wish to be "better than the world" in the sense of being scrupulous to live up to the principle. It is only in respect of a more scrupulous concern about applying that principle that the world does in any degree grow better, as distinguished from wealthier or healthier or more comfortable. And it is difficult to understand how the betterment can take place unless some people are all the time wishing for it. A slaveholder in Virginia who before the Civil War freed his slaves may be fairly described as wishing to be better than his world; but in what special sense could he be therefore said to be "on the threshold of immorality," as compared with those who maintained slavery?

Let us not, however, forget our previous recognition of the entrance of new evil with every new stage of human 'progress,' as commonly understood. Senseless taboos and cruel laws were schemed, doubtless, to make the world better. The world of to-day, so much better ruled than the world of our remote ancestors, has aspects at which they would have been morally terrified. In their barbarism they often practised a beautiful hospitality. In our great cities most men are to each other as aliens, and the number of those who will as readily make room for a stranger as for an acquaintance in an omnibus is apparently small. The golden rule, considered as a universal principle, is still the code of Utopia, though it has always been the rule of intercourse among well-bred people, for whom it is a condition of pleasurable life. The more need then in ethics to dwell on the purpose of betterment, without which moral science is either a simple branch of psychology or a sombre record of general moral failure. Happily, those who make the record can hardly be without the purpose; it is the devotees of the metaphysic of ethics who seem least affected by either the purpose or the record of failure. And as there is reason to think that this lack of touch with life is in some degree either due to or conditioned by error in metaphysic, now as in Plato's day, and in some further degree to absorption in the abstract problem without regard to concrete fact, it is expedient to survey critically the leading types of abstract ethical theory on their philosophic merits.

Summary of the Pre-philosophic Evolution of Morals.

Meanwhile we have to posit the results of our survey of the natural history of morals down to the historic period.

1. Moral feeling or opinion begins as the spontaneous animal approval or resentment of the 'good' and 'bad' *actions* of one's fellows in society, and is thus primarily an organic extension of the organic perceptions of good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant, in general animal experience.

2. The specifically moral aspect of the attitude to actions arises in respect of the familial or group life. The actions of *enemies*, and consequently the relation to enemies, are on a non-moral footing, like those to dangerous animals. Modification in this relation arises only when an enemy is received in the group; and this presumably began with 'marriage by capture.'

3. The primitive codification of morals begins with accepted vetoes on actions seen or supposed to be anti-social. The first vetoes may have been (*a*) those given by the elders to the young, as, the primary discipline administered by mothers to their quarrelling or selfish children, and the inculcation on the young of respect for and service to the aged; (*b*) penalties for violent aggression by one adult upon another—primarily exacted by the sufferer or his kinsman with the sanction of the group; and (*c*) penalties for interference with 'personal rights' of males over females, who were among the first forms of 'property.'

4. Such primary codification was an expression of simple 'natural' bias, regulated by a general perception of the social utility of order. Rules so made became part of the general moral consciousness, dominating in large part the primary egoism of the individual.

5. The habit of acquiescence in such rules, constituting an acquired 'sense of duty,' was susceptible of exploitation by further rules, laid down by elders as conducive to the common good. Such rules, when hygienic, would frequently be useful. Others, being framed under delusions as to the order of nature, were often absurd and injurious; yet were commonly reckoned part of 'duty,' and were seriously obeyed. Thus the dismay set up among ill-fed savages by the birth of twins can become a moral veto on them and, it may be, on their mother, who blindly acquiesces in the code that dooms them and feels herself 'accursed.'

6. This susceptibility to authority, obvious in some measure not only in domesticated animals but in animals living in society, is, like egoism, organic, as is altruism or sympathy with others, seen

often in the life of wild animals. Good and bad, selfish and unselfish bias, are thus alike parts of 'human nature,' and are alike susceptible of education and extension under varying life-conditions and tuitions. But bias varies endlessly in individuals.

7. Religion at an early stage becomes a means of influencing and developing morals, through commands or sanctions, given out as supernaturally promulgated, partly for good, as in the reinforcement of the social code; partly for evil, as in the multiplication of taboos, in the reinforcement of tribal and national hatreds, and in the systematization of the insane practice of human sacrifice. Many of the older religions, including the earlier forms of Judaism, sanctified male and female prostitution. Good precepts of reciprocity, introduced into religious codes, reinforce reciprocity so far as precept can; and belief in a divine command may have given courage to resist evil. But all precepts of reciprocity are seen to be efficient only in so far as they evoke a mental reflection which makes them part of the 'disposition' of the recipient. On the other hand, religion, finding such a social evil as slavery in possession, gives it sanction, and at best regulates it as do lay rulers.

8. Political institutions extend greatly the process of law-making, and play a large part in organizing moral thought. Like religion, they reinforce both good and evil bias, acting as a coercive instrument of religion, legalizing and so extending slavery, and leaning normally to the interests of wealth and caste. On the other hand, political institutions combined with hieratic to control the primordial practice of sanguinary vengeance, gradually substituting a legal for a savage 'conscience' in respect of physico-moral as of pecuniary wrongs; and the extension of States by conquest broke down, in some cases to a large extent, the primeval reign of hostility between groups. Such extensions of areas of normal reciprocity, however, left the primordial antagonism of groups, with its chronic cancelment of inter-tribal morality, in full force as between the enlarged States.

9. The sense of reciprocity thus remained at best unstable as between nations, and no cultivation of moral theory has ever availed to fix it on the normal level of the relations existing within a given political society. But even in the inner social relations the law of reciprocity remains of extremely imperfect application, losing ground on some lines while gaining on others.

10. Philosophy thus approaches the problem of morality as it has been evolved in societies in which egoism and altruism alike persist as organic bias; and the simple balance of self-interest avails

more for regulation than do the teachings of ideal reciprocity and sympathy. Most of the irrational taboos of primitive religion have latterly given way before knowledge, criticism, and ridicule; old penal and social cruelties are abolished or greatly mitigated; slavery has disappeared from the civilized world; and critical reflection tends increasingly to modify not only laws but many of the moral opinions long held to be à priori truths. For rational minds this greatly complicates the abstract or theoretic problem of morals, cancelling many of the simple solutions before current. At the same time the mutation of moral feeling and practice makes clear the perpetual urgency of the practical problem, which coalesces with the theoretical under the form of the question: What are the criteria of right action?

PART III

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHICAL ETHICS

Chapter I

GREEK ETHICAL DOCTRINES

In the pre-philosophic period, as we have partly noted, Greek morality was substantially that of other races at the same culture stages of barbarism or civilization. The Gods of Homer exemplify the ethics of the Greek chieftains who ruled subject populations in Ionia. It is in the democratic Athens of the age after Solon (B.C. 550–500) that there grows up a habit or spirit of ethical debate not to be traced previously in the life of any people of whom we have any detailed history. In Jewry and in China, indeed, there was keen discussion either of common moral practice (as in the Hebrew prophets) or of the general principles of right and wrong (as in Confucius); and Chinese ethic in the sixth century B.C. exhibits a clearness of practical insight not surpassed by the Greeks centuries later. In the nearer East, too, there was ethical as well as religious speculation; and the non-Hebraic Book of Job is a monument of early and searching ethical thought outside Jewry. But in none of the peoples concerned was there any such widespread ratiocinative discussion of moral problems as went on in classic Athens, because no people outside the Ægean had at once the institutions and the civilization which there specially fostered moral criticism and speculation.

Two institutions in particular so operated, the first inevitably influencing the second. In the Athenian dikasteries, the public courts of law, litigations were conducted with a free play of debate such as nowhere else was known. Something of the kind, indeed, took place in the pleading of cases in the Roman forum; but the system of patron and client was less favourable to moral debate; and Athens, besides, cultivated that side of thought in an institution with which early Rome had nothing to compare—the drama. That the drama developed ethically under the influence of the daily play

of dramatic debate in the dikasteries is an inference hardly to be disputed.[1] And when to the dramatic broaching of moral problems there was added the express and more or less systematic discussion of them by the lecturers or 'teachers of wisdom' called Sophists (a term which originally conveyed no sense of aspersion), there was prepared in Athens the ground for a systematic literary, dialectical, and philosophical discussion of morals which has been the ethical schoolroom of the modern world, superseding for philosophic purposes the religious ethic of Christianity.

It begins in problems of practice. Philosophic thought, put in gnomic sayings,[2] there had been long before, as in that quoted from Herakleitos, that "good and bad are one," a kind of proposition he was wont to make on other antitheses, as day and night, the solution being pantheistic.[3] In the same sense he insisted that strife is the spring of things, and that "justice is strife."[4] These are sufficiently abstract conceptions, not conducive to change or criticism of conduct. The Sophists, on the other hand, dealt in moral and prudential exhortation, for the most part taking for granted a common agreement as to right and wrong. Their function of training young men of the upper class for public life involved such an assumption; and one of the reasons for distrusting the disparaging view of their teaching given in the Platonic dialogues is that we find otherwise ascribed to them philosophic doctrines which stand not only for philosophic originality but for fearlessness. The vital doctrine of Protagoras, that "Man is the measure of things," and the declaration of Gorgias that the nature of things ("What *is*") cannot be known, are not the utterances of men concerned only to get fees. Protagoras ran a serious risk by avowing, even in a private discourse at the house of Euripides, agnosticism as to the Gods. Socrates, whose attitude on religion was in the main quite uncritical, would be biassed against him, as would the theosophic Plato, by such a pronouncement. An idealizing view of Socrates tends to throw the whole subject out of perspective.

The Socratic Movement.—In regard to ethics the position was different. It appears to have been with Socrates that there began a newly critical detailed analysis of the current ideas of right and

[1] See the case put by Grote, *History of Greece*, pt. ii, chs. 46 and 67 (ed. 1888, iv, 481 *sq.*; vii, 18 *sq.*). Cp. Benn, *The Philosophy of Greece*, 1898, pp. 158-59. The matter is not considered by Sidgwick in his sketch of the intellectual conditions and habits of Athenian life before and in the time of Socrates (*Outlines of the History of Ethics*, ch. ii); but he would probably not have disputed Grote's thesis.

[2] We see the same phenomenon in ancient China. The lore of Lao-Tsze is preserved in oracular sayings, as is that of Confucius. Expatiation gradually emerges, and we have much more utterance from Mencius than from his great predecessor.

[3] Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies*, ix, 10.

[4] Origen, *Against Celsus*, vi, 42.

wrong, justice and injustice. Commonly credited with a strong bias to the practical, he is really, as Plato presents him, the first of the discursive theorists (earlier theorists having put simple rules of 'the mean' or the generalization that all men seek happiness); and he might well be reckoned, alike in his life and in his death, profoundly unpractical. On the side on which he was avowedly most concerned, that of civics, he made no effort to scheme a workable polity and frame a 'map of life.' If he schemed for his own part as he is made to do in Plato's REPUBLIC, he was quite out of touch with the practical. His real service was, besides oppugning anti-moral doctrine, to challenge conventional thought in the field of moral presupposition while endorsing it in that of religion—a mode of progression not finally helpful to his cause, though it is fairly to be argued that if he incurred death for alleged impiety without disputing the truth of religion he would have met it sooner by disputing it.

It can be no part of our business here to decide whether the 'true Socrates' is presented to us by Plato or by Xenophon, though it is proper to note that neither as to Plato nor as to Socrates can we be sure that we have trustworthy knowledge. Not only are there many grounds for believing that Plato put in the mouth of Socrates, in dialogue, many opinions and arguments which Socrates would have disowned, but there is reason to believe that other writers did the same. Thus we cannot even be sure that the dialogues ascribed to Plato are all of his composition. Besides those actually classified as spurious, a number of the 'canonical' dialogues have been attacked as non-Platonic—some on good grounds. Unfortunately no scientific method has been observed in the process of impeachment, most of the critics having impugned what they thought to be inconsistent with Plato's thought in general; whereas no selection proposed will yield a really coherent or consistent body of doctrine. The true critical method would be an analysis of (1) vocabulary, (2) phraseology, and (3) style, alike in the sense of diction and of sentence construction.[1] But in the case of the Platonic dialogues there is the double difficulty that admirers of the Master would deliberately imitate him in style and phrase.

The Platonic Dialogues.—The broad facts are that some of the dialogues are at points particularly offensive to the modern taste in morals; that Socrates figures in them as in some respects a very different person from the one set forth by Xenophon; and that if all the dialogues assigned to Plato are not his we run a risk of doing

[1] This has been partly done by Prof. Lewis Campbell.

injustice to both him and Socrates. Some enthusiasts insist that Plato is to be trusted because of his superior genius, and Xenophon discredited for his lack of that;[1] but there is really no critical canon that can entitle us to such conclusions. We can but say that, since even the Socrates of Xenophon exhibits apparent inconsistencies—at one time strongly and wisely urging money-earning industry on a pinched aristocratic household, at another censuring a *bourgeois* father for employing his son in his business—we cannot make any mere inconsistency a ground for rejecting as non-Socratic a doctrine put by Plato in the Master's mouth; and that, while we have many grounds for connecting the faulty ethic of the Dialogues with the faults of Plato's character, we run a risk of imputing to him characteristics which were not really his. The attacks on the poets in THE REPUBLIC and elsewhere raise the question whether the writer respected his own business of dialogue-making. His champions excuse him as a literary artist. Why then is he hostile to literary art?

One thing is clear: if the accepted dialogues are all the work of Plato, he was either constantly changing his opinions or bent upon arguing for different opinions at different times. If we compare, for instance, the MENO with the PROTAGORAS and other dialogues, we get two nearly contrary conclusions as to whether virtue can be taught. In the latter, Protagoras is made to affirm this, and Socrates to begin by denying it and to end in ostensibly proving it after getting Protagoras to contradict himself. In the MENO we get in a cluster the conclusions that science is superior to right opinion and that it is not; that they are different but alike in effect; that virtue can be taught and that it cannot, because all knowledge is reminiscence. In the PHILEBUS, again, that doctrine appears to be forgotten. "In the MENO the reasoning seems rather intended to stimulate than to satisfy inquiry.....Nor is Socrates positive of anything but the duty of inquiry."[2]

At times it would even seem reasonable to suspect more than one hand in a dialogue.[3] In the PROTAGORAS, where the eminent Sophist is alternately represented as speaking nobly and weakly, judiciously and illogically, Socrates begins his malicious attack by a use of the sophistical device of 'the One and the Many,' confusing the issue by asking whether virtue is one thing or many things. In the PHILEBUS, a much better piece of argument, that very device is

[1] See, for instance, the brilliant work of Mr. C. Delisle Burns, *Greek Ideals*, 1917, p. 145 *sq.*

[2] Jowett, Introd. 2nd ed. pp. 262, 264-65.

[3] It is not to be forgotten that in later Greece some men of letters accused Plato of wholesale plagiarism (Athenæus, xi, 508; Diogenes Laërtius, III, i, 36 (57),) Protagoras being declared to be the main source for the *Republic*.

ridiculed by Socrates, with a felicity of humour not attained in the earlier dialogue, as a kind of *blague* attractive only to the juvenile mind. If both dialogues were written by one man, we are entitled to impugn his intellectual rectitude. Among our own Platonists some suggest that in the PROTAGORAS Plato is partly making fun of Socrates as well as of the other Sophists;[1] others[2] admit that "to a great extent Protagoras has the best of the argument and represents the better kind of man." When this last view is bracketed with the verdict that "he is inferior to Socrates in dialectic," we are moved to ask whether instruction in the Socratic dialectic can be for our youth either morally or logically improving. In point of fact the Socratic dialectic, as such, seldom proves anything; the Platonic dialogue is often merely a 'put-up game' in which one side finally avows itself beaten or converted. It is open to anybody to recast it to quite contrary conclusions by analogous argumentation.

Plato.—If we take Plato by the letter, we get no great revelation of practical ethical insight. The idolatrous temper still maintained towards him by Platonists[3] does not scruple over a dialogue so nugatory, ethically and logically, as the CHARMIDES, in which Socrates actually ascribes to himself a personal proclivity to the special vice of Greek society. Between that early performance and the late LAWS, in which the author, after a studied parade of moderation and humanity, prescribes the death punishment for any one persistently denying the divine personality of the sun and moon,[4] and equally against those whose belief in the Gods seemed immorally superstitious, we get from the Dialogues a general impression of a cultured Athenian aristocrat of marked literary genius, with some of the worst prejudices of his class, much alive to the shortcomings of the average citizen, and not at all to the hard villainy of his uncle Critias,[5] one of the most criminal public men produced by

[1] So Prof. A. E. Taylor, *Plato*, pp. 32–33.

[2] So Jowett, Introd. to the *Protagoras*.

[3] Thus Prof. A. E. Taylor, the very competent author of a primer on *Plato* (Constable, 1911), remarks (p. 19) on the "pugnacious determination" of Aristotle to find Plato "wrong on every possible occasion," and on "the carping and unpleasantly self-satisfied tone of most of the Aristotelian criticism of Plato." That exactly describes the impression made on an impartial reader by Plato's own dialectic. He seems almost invariably bent, through the instrument of the dialogue, on turning contemporaries into derision, and never gives the impression of a desire to find any good in their thought. Aristotle, realizing the philosophic insufficiency of his teacher's work, criticizes it much more candidly than Plato usually attacks other thinkers. And with what less right? Whatever may be the truth as to Aristotle's action as a member of Plato's school (as to which see Chaignet, *La vie et les Écrits de Platon*, 1871, p. 78 *sq.*), his written criticisms of Plato are perfectly decorous in tone. If, as seems highly probable, Aristotle in the *Poetics* is rebutting Plato's inartistic doctrine as to poetry (cp. A. O. Prickard, *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, 1891, p. 32 *sq.*), he does his work with the finest discretion.

[4] *Laws*, x, 885–88, 899, 908–9.

[5] Unless he alludes to him in the *Laws*, x, 1908. In the *Charmides* (161–62) Critias is represented as lying.

Athens in that age. We see Plato, after the frightful episode of the rule of the Thirty Tyrants, in which Athenian Tories gave lessons in atrocity to all succeeding revolutionists, planning a system of government for Athens in which no lesson of human nature taught in that episode appears to have been learned; and in which, indeed, there is so little sense of moral and political reality that we are helped by it to understand the amazing vicissitudes of Athenian polity in that age. The ideal Republic is one with rigid class divisions, sexual promiscuity for the ruling class, State-managed infanticide, and a military caste who begin their preparation by seeing war as children. Later in life we see the Utopist disillusioned as to the possibility of any such philosophic dictatorship as he appears to have dreamt of, but to the last the self-willed, intolerant, and in most things unprogressive patrician, committed, like Aristotle, to the maintenance of slavery, and thereby withheld from any higher or more universal ethical conception than that of the abstract welfare of the existing State and the ideal of the highest standard of personal poise for the favoured few. That such a teacher should be held to have thought greatly on ethics for all time is a signal proof of the power of sheer literary charm over the spirit of man in all ages.

Socrates.—Plato's use of Socrates as mouthpiece, indeed, suggests some possible sense of his own deficiency, and makes us more eager to get at the real ethical standpoint of that remarkable man, who so deeply impressed his age. We are to figure him as the inspired and ever-dialoguing 'man in the street' of democratic Athens, where the courts of law were great public juries, such as that by which he was condemned to death; and where an insoluble strife was chronically waged between the comparatively wealthy 'upper' class and the large body of non-wealthy burgesses, many if not most of whom, like the nobles, owned slaves, who had no political or legal rights. The bond of affinity between Socrates and Plato was that the former, the poor burgess, spending his life in talking in the public places or among groups of fellow-citizens in rich men's houses, agreed with the latter, the young aristocrat, in censuring the state of things in which a more or less ignorant majority were always deciding legal or political issues which they did not rightly understand. It was one of the special difficulties of the situation that questions of change in the constitution could not be searchingly discussed without arousing turbulent resentment among the majority; but Socrates, with his special gift for the method of questioning, contrived constantly to put the view that, whereas no one would employ a tradesman of any kind that did not

know his special business, it was folly to choose men by lot for the public services without any security for their competence. And he pressed the general conclusion that government should be carried on by men specially trained or specially competent to govern, even as ships were managed by trained pilots and captains.[1]

All this has at first sight the air of being notably practical. It is, however, an industrious evasion of the main practical problem, taking a short cut to a theory which evaded the primary ethical problem of politics, ancient and modern. Socrates knew well enough that in many Greek States, as in Athens after Solon, government had been carried on either by 'tyrants' or by oligarchs, of whom many were comparatively well-informed and capable men; and that nevertheless there had been under such governments, apparently, as much friction and injustice and strife as in latter-day Athens up to the day of the Thirty Tyrants, the outcome being commonly a series of revolutions. The standing trouble was that men in power tended to abuse their power. In Athens the methods which Socrates derided were resorted to by way of preventing the engrossing of power. And they proceeded upon the rather fine ideal that every citizen should function in the polity—an ideal of which Protagoras gives such a worthy vindication (in the Platonic dialogue in which he appears) that we may surmise sympathy in the author or in some interpolator. The fulfilment of the ideal of Socrates would presumably have been the rule of the 'benevolent despot,' which is the least practical of political systems, seeing that men freed from all need of taking decisions must soon become, as Mill was apparently the first to point out, incapable of judging whether a despot is competent or not.

Unless we are to explain it by the censorship of popular jealousy, the failure to face the fundamental political problem is surprising. Socrates, from the Xenophontic point of view, was specially meritorious in that he was concerned for right practice. Yet, after living through the lurid episode of the Thirty Tyrants, a murderous tyranny of oligarchs who claimed to have special knowledge and capacity, but who by Socrates's own account were as shepherds who killed the sheep, he seems to have made no further advance either in theoretic or in practical handling of political issues. The bloody miscarriage of the ideal of 'expert' rule left him still craving for experts, and more willing to taunt the burgesses into condemning him than to help them sanely to walk straight. There was in him a certain

[1] Xenophon, *Memorabilia*.

animus against democracy which he never felt against oligarchy as such.

On the other hand, Socrates had unquestionably a much keener sense of justice and on some sides a much more balanced judgment than two men out of three in his day. He gave the proof of both when, during his single tenure of the office of Prytanis or senator for his tribe, he immovably refused to assent to the unconstitutional procedure by which the six generals were condemned and executed after the battle of Arginusæ. All the other Prytanes yielded to the popular clamour; he alone would not give way. And he was equally firm in personal resistance to one of the atrocities of his friends, the Critian faction, when that was in power. Those very episodes, indeed, indicate the difficulty and danger of challenging the political actions of the time; but if anything at all was to be accomplished in the way of putting public conduct on right lines it was the ethical no less than the practical aspect of such doings that needed to be closely discussed. Yet it does not appear that Socrates carried his handling of ethics further than the pressing of his standing thesis that virtue ought to give true happiness and that vice ought not to; that what men needed to make them act rightly was true knowledge; that right conduct brought happiness; and that the good and bad would be respectively rewarded and punished in a future state. There the Socrates of Xenophon and the dialectician in some of the Platonic dialogues substantially coincide.[1]

In taking up this position Socrates seems to have been primarily led by the current Greek philosophy of 'nature' which he supposed himself to have put aside. That philosophy contemplated man as part of the Cosmos, concentrating inquiry, however, on the origin and nature of the Cosmos, and taking man for granted in terms of current beliefs and moralities. Socrates dismissed the cosmic inquiry as hopeless, as some of the Sophists had already done before him, and proposed to limit all speculative study to man. But in assuming that all that was required to mend conduct was a knowledge of what way of life would answer best, he was really viewing man from a quasi-cosmic standpoint, and missing the fact that the concept of right and wrong is homocentric. Nothing, certainly, could be more formally utilitarian than the typical doctrine of this, the supposed confuter of utilitarianism in advance. But the great crux of ethics was then, as it is now, to bring the utilitarian test of action consciously within, and not to set it up outside and in effect

[1] Plato, *Protagoras;* Xenophon, *Memorabilia.*

against the acquired or intuitive sense of right, duty, conscience. And Socrates, who is credited by a great historian[1] with "prodigious efficacy in forming new philosophical minds," does not seem to have been fortunate in leading men to apply to their conduct either the fundamental test of reciprocity or the checking test of utility.

It is difficult to doubt that, whatever assents Plato might make interlocutors give in written dialogue, Socrates tended to set up moral scepticism not merely by his own eristic way of talking, but by his professed conviction that the virtuous man ought to be and therefore must be happy, and that the man of pleasure ought not to be and therefore is not happy. Such a line of affirmation not only clashed with common sense, but suggested unwillingness to face the fact, first faced and then outfaced in the book of JOB, that righteous men may be very ill-fated, and that both the unrighteous and the cheerfully indifferent may have a much better time. Socrates was really entangled from the first in the nugatory undertaking to which the Stoics afterwards devoted themselves of proving that our sorrows ought not to make us sorry if we are wise and good, and our joys ought not to make us happy if we are not wise. Too many people know too well that they do, though Socrates perhaps really did not know it.

His way of pressing utility would seem to have been the chief hindrance to his moral influence. It is remarkable how little use is made in Greek ethical discussion of the so-called Golden Rule, the principle of reciprocity, which was certainly formulated for Greeks long before the age of Socrates.[2] We get it in effect from the unphilosophic Isocrates, who, in rivalry with Plato, conducted a 'philosophic' school, designed to turn out practical men of affairs, and whom Plato disparaged as turning out only superficial smatterers. Isocrates puts the maxim twice as a practical principle,[3] and Aristotle puts it implicitly in the POLITICS, in a censure of those who will not do as they would be done by;[4] and it is implicit in parts of his ethics; but as a criterion in ethical theory it never emerges in the whole Socratic and Platonic literature. It is to be inferred, then, that as reasoners on ethics the Athenian thinkers reckoned the rule either useless or impracticable; and when we realize their standing dilemma in the matter of slavery we can hardly doubt that the latter view was the deterrent. Athenian

1 Grote, *History*, ed. 1888, vii. 133.
2 It is assigned to Thales (*Diog. Laert.* I, i, 36) in the form "Never to do ourselves what we blame in others."
3 *Ad Demon.*, c. 4; *Ægineticus*, c. 23. (The *Ad Demonicum* is reckoned by some critics spurious.)
4 *Politics*, vii, 2.

ethic, even in the hands of the chief masters, would thus appear to have lain under an initial disability that excluded thorough discussion. It would not take the Christian course of propounding the Golden Rule and maintaining slavery all the same.

It would indeed be fatuous to assume that in the modern world the principle of reciprocity is so generally acted on, even at points where exceptions are not avowed, as to set up an absolute moral difference between the two civilizations. But where that rule is avowed as a starting point there is posited the conception of morals as duty towards others, which gives a moral standing ground for moral science; whereas Greek ethic, broadly speaking, runs to the finding of self-regarding standards or clues for ethical practice. On the one hand we have the Socratic test of utility, of what answers in practice, or of what produces happiness in the good mind; on the other we have the Platonic leaning to the analogies of the beautiful and the fit, which, though philosophically suggestive, cannot furnish either an ethical test or an ethical foundation; and between these we may place the Aristotelian test of the Mean, in which virtue or right action is indicated as a mean between contrary extremes which are vices.[1]

Aristotle and 'the Mean.'—This again points back to the primary synthetic Naturalism which envisaged Man as a part of the Cosmos like another, and did not proceed to specify him as the ethic-making animal. Aristotle's scheme is indeed the subtlest of those primary speculations of Naturalism, seeking as it does to find a completely objective theory of conduct, statable in terms rather geometrical than ethical. It is evidently pre-Aristotelian in some form, being presented by Glaucon in Plato's REPUBLIC[2] as a current formula by which some men accounted for the establishment of a rule of justice. Justice or legality, they said, stood midway between two extremes, "that which is best, to commit injustice with impunity, and that which is worst, to suffer injustice without any power of retaliating"—a quaint parody, by anticipation, of the Aristotelian doctrine.

And there is about the old formula a certain touch of brutal actuality which disappears in the Aristotelian handling. Laws *were* actually a compromise between being alternately hammer and anvil, though the primitives who first made them cannot have put the case in the Greek fashion. But neither was the common notion of virtue reached on the lines set forth by Aristotle; nor could it be

[1] Aristotle, *Nicom. Eth.* II, vii.

[2] II, 359.

so verified. For, if we ask how he or any one could discern truthfulness to be somehow midway between vainglorious boasting and ironical dissimulation [1]—as if these were the only cognate ideas —we at once see that the ordinal scheme is not really a test or objective index of the preferability of the course counted preferable, but a mere grouping which follows on an already decided preference for that course, made without any calculation of its order as between any other two courses.

In this case the scale is not even ethical in our sense of the term, though it was so in the primary Greek sense. Truthfulness is treated as a matter of *deportment*, of 'good form'; and the virtue is made to consist in being neither boastful nor mock-modest. But this is really a grading of self-assertion, not of veracity. Truthfulness, if taken as a mean at all, must be placed (say) between indiscretion or over-communicativeness on the one hand, and either secretiveness or deceit on the other. Either Aristotle's word ἀλήθεια does not mean truthfulness in our sense or he has missed his mark. But, if we restate the proposition in terms of a moral as distinct from a deportmental conception of truthfulness, we shall still find no ethical criterion, in our sense of the word. The judgment which places, say, Dissimulation to the left and Heedless Self-Betrayal to the right of Veracity is merely a formal discovery made after a spontaneous or other decision that Veracity is obligatory on us as fellow-citizens. For we might as plausibly place Dissimulation in the middle, between Mendacity on the one hand and either Veracity or Indiscretion on the other, and thus make Dissimulation a virtue, and Veracity a form of 'excess.' When, in fact, Aristotle pronounces the virtues to be each the mean between two *vices*, an excess and a defect, he has already settled that each is what he calls it in respect of something else than position in a scale.

When it comes to arguing, as he does, that indignation (*nemesis*) against prosperous wrong-doing is a virtue recognizable as a mean between the 'excess' which is envious of everybody's prosperity and the 'defect' which, through sheer malice, is pleased at seeing iniquity prosper, we realize once for all that the doctrine of the 'mean' is a fictitious exercise, and not an ethical test at all. Anger at 'prosperous iniquity' is not a degree of the envy that scowls on all prosperity; it is a resentment of the iniquity. Nor would pure 'malice' rejoice at seeing other people's iniquity prosper; it would operate like envy against the unjust as against the just. The logical counter extreme to envy of all prosperity would be placid indifference

[1] Aristotle's terms are ἀλαζονεία and εἰρωνεῖα; *Nic. Eth.* II, vii, 12. The first (= imposture) carries a sense of braggartry; the second goes beyond our force of *irony*, and implies feigning.

about moral distinctions in respect of means of wealth-getting: if envy is an 'excess,' what is malice (ἐπιχαιρεκακία)? The verb *epichairo* means to exult, mostly in a malicious sense; *epichairagathos* expressly signified one who rejoiced in the happiness of others; *epichairekakia* is joy in the misfortune or pain of others —what the Germans call *Schadenfreude*. Aristotle simply says that the malicious man, the *epichairekakos*, rejoices (over successful iniquity) where the justly indignant man is angry. But malice in this case is plainly not a mere deficiency in a good quality; it is by implication positively evil, inasmuch as it is not conceived to be joy at seeing the evil-doer punished. One translator [1] honestly puts in brackets the logical implication that the malicious man's joy is over the *suffering* he sees; others [2] make Aristotle ascribe to him joy at the success of iniquity, by way of preserving the appearance of the formula of the mean. But joy at the sight of prosperous iniquity is either (*a*) ignorant or excessive *sympathy*, which is absolutely opposed to the meaning either of the Greek word or of any English equivalent, or (*b*) it *is* iniquity.

The formula, then, once more, will not stand. Consistently applied, it would yield us, as aforesaid, the twofold conception of moral indifference (defect) on the one hand, and habitual envy on the other, with *just* anger at wrongdoing as the mean; but, if our judgment has no other guide than the theoretic position of one quality as between others, we might just as well place indifference as a virtuous mean between the *nemesis* which denounces successful iniquity and the parasitical sympathy which applauds it.

In a word, we do not get our conceptions of virtue in the *way* that Aristotle by implication here asserts we do. We either detest the successful wronger or secretly sympathize with him; we do not ask ourselves whether we are entitled to be angry with him as a medium course between envy of all prosperity and either pleasure in suffering or pleasure in successful iniquity. On that plan the pickpocket could, and probably does, claim to observe the mean between robbery with violence and the spiritless honesty which never steals at all, and to be thus, on Aristotelian principles, a virtuous man in that respect.

Aristotle was of course seeking a code for men who wanted to be just. The puzzle is as to why, in the effort to reach the nature of right conduct, he should adopt a method which really ignores the all-important question of the nature or criterion of justice. Evidently, as aforesaid, the test he adopted was a current one; and the simple

[1] Chase. [2] Brown, Peters, Williams.

explanation appears to be that it was the social code of a *caste*, who had a keen sense of 'good form' and were sincerely concerned about good relations in their own social circle, but were so habituated to some arbitrary and non-reciprocal relations with certain outside classes that they tacitly put aside any criterion or challenge that implied a universal reciprocity. The rule of 'the mean' was a good one for *manners;* and they extended it to morals (in our sense) without facing the underlying problem of distinguishing between good manners and good*ness*. With all his calm orderliness and scientific temper, therefore, Aristotle compares rather unsatisfactorily, as a didactic moralist for plain men, with the Chinese Confucius, who, indeed, was not perplexed by the fatal problem of slavery which disrupted Aristotle's ethical code.

Aristotle's attitude to the ethical test is the more remarkable because he quite clearly and definitely distinguishes between self-regarding and other-regarding virtues. He has been praised[1] for making the greatest discovery in ethics by distinguishing as he does between the virtues of the theoretical reason (the *dianoëtic* or ratiocinative), wisdom, insight, prudence; and those of the practical reason, courage, self-control, liberality, truthfulness, etc., which are the *ethical* virtues. But this is neither an ethical nor a scientific division: prudence and self-control are of the same order; and courage, considered as a cultivable virtue, is on the same psychic plane. The really important and valid distinction drawn by Aristotle is that between the other-regarding virtues, which he sums up in Justice, and the self-regarding, which include alike the dianoëtic and the so-called ethical or practical. And this vital distinction lay to his hand, as he avows, in the proverb: "In justice are comprehended all the virtues."[2] As he adds:—

> It is perfect [virtue] because he who has it applies it towards another, and not towards himself alone; for many there be who can powerfully practise virtue at home but not towards their neighbours.....Justice alone, of all the virtues, seems to the good of another, for it operates towards another, whether the head or a member of the commonwealth. The worst man is he who works evil as regards both himself and others; the best is he who works good not only for himself but for others—truly a hard task. This justice is not a mere part of virtue, but virtue in sum; and the contrary injustice is not a part of wrong, but wrong in sum.

Here is a very explicit recognition of the other-regarding character

[1] By Wundt, *Ethical Systems*, Eng. tr. p. 19 (vol. ii of *Ethics*; bk. II of *Ethik*).
[2] *Nic. Eth.* V, i, 15.

of what we call ethical action; but when this is said, the philosopher resumes the function of moralist for the few; discusses the applications of justice as between men of the same class or caste; examines the duties of reciprocity or 'retaliation' in some detail, recognizing some of the difficulties; but never attempts to apply in the same detail the principle of reciprocity outside his class, expressly noting that there can be no question of justice towards a slave, because he is our property. Thus justice itself becomes for Aristotle "a kind of mean";[1] and is practically conceived by him as the supreme thing in *deportment*, in the attainment of one's ideal of the Good Man, and in one's relations with one's associates. The conception is not to be made light of; for, to say nothing of the 'gentleman' of all ages who does not mind bilking his tailor but is scrupulous in paying his gambling debts, we all know how large a part behaviour (poise, balance of character) plays in determining our estimates of each other.[2] And there is much truth in Aristotle's maxim that virtue is a matter of good habits. But the fact remains that he, the most systematic thinker of the ancient world, keeps his 'ethics' mainly a matter of a self-respecting line of conduct, making his ideal that of the self-poised philosopher as such; and that when he proceeds from ethics to politics, which by definition was to be the practical application of ethics, the fundamental deficiency determines many of the vital conclusions.

The Limitations of Greek Ethics.—We must always remember, then, that for the Greeks 'ethics' had not the specialized meaning which we give it as a result of long discussion on what constitutes sense of duty, rightness of aim, intention, purpose, as well as concerning moral rightness as an attribute of actions. Even in modern ethics, indeed, it is common to consider wise action in one's own regard as part of the subject matter;[3] and it is of course obvious that what may be termed a self-regarding virtue, as temperance, has an other-regarding side, intemperance being plainly anti-social. But in the Greek view self-regarding ideals were made prominent without avowed reference to the good of others, save in the general subsumption of the good of the State; and even when the good of the State was put as a main end it was never so analysed as to secure recognition of the rights of all individuals. Still less did

[1] Bk. V. c. iii. [2] Cp. Hume, *Inquiry Concerning Morals*, App. IV.
[3] See, for instance, Mr. R. A. P. Rogers's *Short History of Ethics*, p. 5, where there are given as the first grounds of the difficulties of ethics (1) the need to make a selection or gradation among our own interests, and (2) the need to guard against such a following of particular interests (*e.g.* appetites) as will frustrate their final satisfaction and obstruct that of other interests. Compare Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, ch. ix.

Greek ethic contemplate a reciprocity embracing aliens as such, or alien States in relation to one's own. And as it was precisely the other-regarding side of ethics that it most behoved them to develop if their polity was to survive, the defect was cardinal. Instead of an inquest which might lead to Greek unity, they sought either theoretic or practical ideals for the free State-loving citizen as such, 'and there an end.'

Thus we find Aristotle in his ETHICS discussing courage, liberality, and magnificence; and Plato analysing and arguing (if the CHARMIDES be really his) concerning *Sophrosyne*, which our scholars, following Cicero, usually translate by 'Temperance,'[1] while the French (recognizing that it means both 'moderation' and 'prudence') more accurately make it *Sagesse*, and some Germans *Besonnenheit*, others *gesunder Verstand*. Now, courage, which when ethically considered is much more nearly an excellence or good endowment than a virtue, however lamentable be its absence, was for most Greeks, as for the natural man everywhere, simply *more* important than what we call virtue, being of prime importance to the State, to say nothing of good fame. And liberality, or magnificence, in the matter of 'liturgies' or public 'services,' was also a matter of good fame.

One of the most interesting developments of the LAWS, as compared with the earlier Platonic teaching, is the explicit challenge to the Lacedemonian creed of militarism, in which physical courage and endurance are the supreme object, war being regarded as an eternal condition of human life. The "Athenian Stranger," who is assumed to represent Plato himself, goes so far as to tell the Cretan and the Spartan (I, 630) that the mercenary soldier who is ready to die at his post has plenty of courage, "and yet they are generally and without exception insolent, unjust, violent men, and the most senseless of human beings." The rarer and more valuable courage, he argues, is that which resists the seductions of pleasure. The first is "only fourth-rate." But this doctrine is not ventured on in the REPUBLIC or the PROTAGORAS or any other of the Platonic dialogues, and Aristotle treats physical courage as one of the general

[1] This rendering, adopted by Jowett, makes much of the *Charmides* unintelligible. No one could say, as Critias is in this interpretation assumed to have said, that temperance is minding (or doing or making) our own business, though that might be said of *sagesse*. As the Greek word carries the common Greek idea of balance or poise between extremes, the nearest English equivalent (if we reject *wisdom*) would be one of those or Discretion; and one translator (Wright) has adhered to that word in his version of the *Protagoras*, where the argument of Socrates turns on the quibble set up by the two forces of the Greek word. Jowett in that dialogue sometimes renders *Sophrosyne* by 'wisdom,' sometimes by 'temperance,' and sometimes by 'moderation.' The quibble of Socrates is a striking illustration of the frequent unreality of the Platonic dialectic. But, inasmuch as that was involved in the immaturity of Greek psychology, the ambiguous quality of such a word as *Sophrosyne* should be made plain by all translators.

virtues the lack of which flaws the man, without raising any correlative questions.

These matters were for the Greeks as truly *ethica*, things pertaining to good conduct, as were questions of just or righteous dealing. As Grote has remarked, their moral systems turned mainly on a conception of the *summum bonum*, the highest good for the individual, and to this the problem of justice is always subsidiary.[1] By implication, Grote agrees with Schopenhauer[2] in considering this to be a vital shortcoming, since mere Eudæmonism,[3] as that attitude was and is termed, misses the vital aspect of ethics as a question of our duty towards others. They seem at least to be more concerned over questions of *fit* living, living up to the ideal of *kalokagathos*, the good and morally beautiful, than over the problem of what we call rightness and wrongness, or justice and injustice, as between man and man, State and State.

The Problem of Justice.—They necessarily debated much, indeed, living as they did in a world of chronic strife, concerning the problem of justice, and in such a fashion as to show their need for criteria, being much puzzled to decide what justice was, in view of their own general public practice. And on this side Greek moral philosophy may be said to have definitely failed, even as Greek civilization definitely failed, for lack of a practical solution. Plato's most famous dialogue, THE REPUBLIC, sets out ostensibly to ascertain what justice is, Socrates being the investigator. The very method of dialogue, as practised by Plato, is unpropitious to the quest. To judge from his performance even at its best, dialogue was for the skilled Greeks an intellectual game in which one disputant sets out to confute some position (often stated more or less incompetently) by a verbalist procedure in which the opponent is made from time to time to gainsay himself in an infantine fashion. The ethic of literary dialogue, apparently, never much concerned Plato, and still gives little concern to his more devout admirers. But though there is often an abundance of ingenious analysis of ideas, the reasoning towards the proposed conclusion is often surprisingly evasive, the antagonist meekly avowing defeat when his questions have been merely eluded and the strength of his case obscured by a confusing dialectic. Plato and his Socrates seem

[1] *Fragments on Ethical Subjects*, 1876, Essay III.

[2] *Basis of Morality*, Eng. tr. p. 24. Schopenhauer's account of Eudæmonism, relieving Plato of the charge, is inadequate.

[3] The very existence of such a term (derived from the idea of the Good Daimon or Genius), implying as it did no criticism, tells of the special Greek approach to the problem of morals.

never to be willing to recognize that there is any element of truth on the other side. They are special pleaders.

In THE REPUBLIC we have first a debate in which Thrasymachus, the popular, fee-demanding Sophist (always as such scorned by the relatively rich Plato and the contentedly poor Socrates),[1] blatantly flaunts the cynical doctrine that injustice pays one better than justice, or, as it might be put to-day, that honesty is *not* the best policy. Socrates wants to prove that it is, but divides his effort between this and explaining that the just man gets a good reputation and is accordingly happy. Then, Thrasymachus having capitulated in the usual fashion, Glaucon protests, in the interests of argument, and challenges Socrates really to disprove the confessedly common cynical creed that we are just only because or where we are compelled to be, and that every one would be unjust if he could, to his own advantage. As Glaucon points out, the respectable doctrine makes much of the social *reward* of justice; and he and Adeimantus after him demand that Socrates shall prove the just man to be blessed even when he is reputed unjust and vilified accordingly. Instead of avowing that a normal social ratification of justice belongs to the idea of it, and candidly confessing that men who were vilified all round for justice would be apt to alter their conduct, Socrates sets about ascertaining what justice is by inquiring what a quite wisely managed society *would* be like. And it lies on the face of the dialogue that Plato soon saw how injustice inheres in such a social state as he lived in; but was not disposed to say so by way of any concrete impeachment.

Socrates pictures a primitively contented population, living simply, and careful not to have more children than they can feed —a touch of Greek sanity which disappears from the ethic of the Christian Church. The aristocratic Glaucon protests that the food described is fit only for pigs; whereupon Socrates, who seems here to change his whole plan of campaign, ironically confesses that on this ground there must be more production of luxuries, leading in the end to a forcible expansion of the State's boundaries at the expense of neighbouring States, and the establishment of a class of professional soldiers to make good the aggression. At this point, as he says, we have traced the origin of war to "causes which are also the causes of almost all the evils in States, private as well as public."[2] That is to say, injustice is inherent in social life as that has hitherto gone; and justice, by implication, is to be found only in the 'simple

[1] Equally, indeed, by the aristocratic Aristotle, who gives to the matter one profoundly contemptuous glance. *Nic. Eth.* IX, i, 6.

[2] Bk. II, 374.

life.' But instead of prescribing (as it would certainly have been useless to do) a return to that life, Socrates proceeds to plan, quite as uselessly, a Platonic State in which everything will be controlled by a caucus of Superior Persons, property being held in common, and communal life for the sexes (with 'women's rights') replacing the narrow Athenian family.

With the indurated militarism of Sparta fronting all Greece, it would have been worse than idle, even in a sketch of a Utopia, to propose to abolish militarism in Athens alone; so the caste of professional soldiers is to be duly established, presumably to check aggression by others, though militarism had been represented as necessary only to support aggression. And that is the Socratic-Platonic answer to the question, What is Justice? At the end, as at the beginning, stress is laid on the rewarding of virtue by the Gods; and a future state of bliss and bale is insisted on with quite Christian unction.

The critical verdict to which we seem to be led is that the object of Plato is rather to steer clear of a radical ethic than to proclaim it. What Greece needed above all things, a working polity of peace, is never even planned for; and it may be a fair inference that Plato had no hope of one. As a schema of how justice is to be attained, the dialogue is really a pessimistic judgment on human society as then existing: if it finally says anything on the problem, it is that justice is attainable only in Cloud-Cuckoo-Town, as Aristophanes would put it. Whether Plato was, as Bain has suggested, compulsorily prudent after the execution of Socrates, fearing to challenge explicitly the ruling ethic as such, is a question hardly to be answered. He may have been at heart pessimistic about social evolution, and have taken the method of Utopia-planning to shadow forth his conviction.

Slavery.—The same question suggests itself over the PROTAGORAS. At the outset of that dialogue, the wisdom-seeking young Hippocrates tells Socrates how he has been hunting a runaway slave; and together they proceed to the house of Callias, where Protagoras is staying, and where they find the door kept by a eunuch. Were these details ironically thrown in to hint that life abounded in injustices which professedly justice-loving men did not even recognize? Socrates in the dialogue gives no sign of recognizing them, though he is full of caustic contempt for Protagoras's practice of taking fees from young men for teaching them how to manage their affairs and become good public speakers.

Nor is there anything in that or the other dialogues to show that

Plato was concerned to eliminate slavery, though Aristotle's allusion to certain self-contradictory persons in the POLITICS (I, vi, 5) is held to point to Plato or Platonists. They argue, he says, that slavery in war is just, but contradict themselves. Now, in THE REPUBLIC (v, 469) Socrates, taking slavery for granted, argues that Greeks should not enslave Greeks, for the strictly utilitarian reason that they thus make themselves collectively an easier prey to the barbarians. But by implication he entirely approves of enslaving non-Greeks; and in the LAWS (x, 777–78) Plato, remarking how troublesome slaves are, points to the alternatives (1) of having slaves who do not speak the same language and (2) of treating them well, for our own sakes as well as theirs. Of the *injustice* of slavery as such there is no recognition. It is taken for granted that society cannot subsist without it.

Aristotle indeed shows some moral uneasiness as compared with Plato and Socrates. While in the ETHICS (viii, xi, 6–7) he pronounces the slave "a living tool," and declares that his master's relations with him, accordingly, "do not admit of friendship or justice," in the POLITICS (I, vi, end) he decides that "a mutual utility and friendship may subsist between the master and the slave .....when they are placed *by nature* in that relation to each other." Are we again facing those chronic tamperings with texts which are so baffling in ancient literature;[1] or had Aristotle seen reason to modify his position? However that may be, he never truly moralized it. The thesis that some are born to be slaves and some to govern is a mere evasion. Greek racialism readily assumed that all Greeks were born to rule all barbarians; but Aristotle does not even pretend to suggest that the men actually enslaved by fortune of war, whether Greek or non-Greek, are 'born' or naturally destined to that fate; and the enslavement of the children of slaves he equally takes for granted.

Thus he is finally only a trifle less unscrupulous on the subject than Plato, who in the LAWS (x, 778) puts it as a matter of course that "each of the citizens is provided, as far as possible, with a sufficient number of suitable slaves, who can help him in what he has to do." If Plato ever felt the pinch of the problem, he feared to proclaim it; and the presumption is that he did not feel it.

Platonic Ethic in Sum.—On any view his ethic remains evasive. The PHILEBUS, reckoned his best ethical dialogue, and certainly one of his ablest dialectic performances, with all its

[1] The text of Aristotle is very commonly corrupt; and the treatises often read like the reports of students, trying to reproduce the Master's teaching from notes.

Socratic prolixity (as of men having nothing to do in life but talk), is but an elaborate declaration in favour of seeking good in the mental rather than in the physical life. For such counsels Plato has always had more eulogy than is ever given to good critical thinking. It was doubtless a laudable course to explain to bright young Athenians who glorified the physical pleasures that even these depended on the mind, and that the joys of the mental life are the more enduring. But a really scientific attitude towards moral science would have dictated the avowal that if an organism fixedly finds its 'pleasure' only on the lower lines such pleasure will remain for that organism its 'highest good.' Nothing, however, could ever persuade Plato to put explicitly the consequences of his own implicit recognition of evil as inherent in the nature of things. He vehemently insists that God, or the Gods, cannot be conceived as causing evil; they must be held unable to eliminate it from the world; though he also puts it as a matter of course that the universe is under divine rule. Deity is thus alternately declared to be supreme and to be baffled by evil elements in the All. For the pagan philosopher as for the Christians who followed him, the solution is the frankly unphilosophic one of merely denouncing the bad for being bad, even as those who deny the theosophy are denounced for that denial. Plato's philosophy, in short, ends in dogmatic theology, and his ethic of necessity does the same.

The best points in it are those of which its favourers make least account—notably its frequent hints of utilitarianism. In THE REPUBLIC Socrates declares (v, 457) that "this is most excellent, and will ever continue to be said, that whatever is useful (ὠφέλιμος) is honourable, and whatever is hurtful is worthless." Of course this leaves us asking what is to be regarded as the moral test of usefulness, and whether the utilities of one man or set of men are to override those of others—the old problem of justice. But the test of utility as against the alleged intuition, and by implication against the religious tradition, is very explicitly affirmed, and is so far a lead to reason. This is the main superiority of Greek ethic over that of the Hebrews, which is always intuitional, and gives fatal power to tradition.

Another rational though ill-developed element in the Socratic-Platonic ethic is the thesis (PROTAGORAS, 357, 361; MENO, 87, 88, 97) that rightness in conduct comes of (or, as Socrates at times confusingly puts it, *is*[1]) knowledge. The weakness of that position,

[1] Aristotle (*Nic. Eth.* vi, 13) corrects this by saying that the virtues are not, as Socrates held, prudence or science, but connected with or according to prudence.

as there put, is that the required 'knowledge' is supposed to be communicable at all points to all men, which is so plainly false that the truth in the doctrine is obscured rather than propounded. To say that courage consists in the knowledge of the folly of fear is to imply that any physical coward can be made courageous by instruction; and, similarly, that the predominantly malicious or envious or dishonest man can be 'made to see' that he would be happier if he became honest and benevolent. Now, men with proclivities of that kind may be so educated as to correct them; courage is certainly acquirable by many who are not spontaneously brave; but the power of self-rectification obviously varies much in different men; and when we realize that in some the positive bent to wrong, with correlatively weak capacity for self-criticism, makes them permanently anti-social and incapable of fair reciprocity, we face the limitation of the 'knowledge' theorem. The proposition can no longer hold, save by making knowledge mean disposition, bias, character; and the argument would then come to the same thing as saying that all that is wanted to make a man good is goodness.

And this is in effect fully recognized in the THEAETETUS, where, by way of explaining the possibility of error, we are told (191, 194–95) that men's minds are as blocks of wax of very different consistency, yielding different results to impressions. Here the argument is potentially carried too far the other way, since error may arise in many modes, irrespective of mental structure; and in the course of his infinitely rambling discourse Socrates is made to discard this and other tentative suggestions. But he does not retract the truth embodied in it; and frequently in other places he recognizes the variety of native formation of characters. These divergences set us asking once more in what spirit or by what hands the dialogues are compounded; and why no one is ever made to explode the fallacies of Socrates by arguments elsewhere put in Socrates's mouth. In the Platonic dialogues we are always finding antagonists professing to be converted and assenting to things to which, we feel, such men would not have assented.[1]

The Socratic-Platonic ethic, finally, however, remains rationalist in respect of its recognition of the universal fact that all conduct aims at self-satisfaction, though it has played its part in obscuring the truth by making the term 'pleasure' (*hedonē*) carry in ethical discussion the force of sensuality. It seems impossible to induce

[1] *E.g.* in the LAWS, where the Cretan and the Spartan tamely concur at once in doctrines quite opposed to their own. It would almost seem as if the habit of writing one-sided dialogues had blinded Plato to the normal obstinacy of average men in their prejudices.

religionists in any period to see that for scientific purposes we must have a general term covering all states of satisfaction; and that, provided we put right conduct as a matter of choice among those states, it matters little what current general term we use. Nothing can be more obvious than the divergence of men's satisfactions, or the fact that the same man (*e.g.* Antony) may at one time undergo desperate toil and pain to attain an end only so attainable, and at another stake all on pleasures of the senses. Equally notorious is it that men may be framed or trained to find their main satisfactions in ideal ends, beside which common 'pleasures' figure as contemptible. What holds for all alike is that all men thus follow their inclinations, whether innate or acquired; and that for each the following is a seeking of 'his pleasure'—a phrase which in other languages as in English means 'his preference' = 'what pleases him,' be it in a hair shirt, gain-getting, appetite, art, or self-sacrifice.

Down to our own time men elaborately propound the obvious truth that we do not in our action propose to ourselves pleasure conceived as such, but a concrete end in the attainment of which pleasure will be felt; and that the end or the pleasure may in a given case be purely a state of mind—a scientific discovery, a 'record' in hill-climbing, the helping of a friend, the success of a cause, a public service, a benefaction, the creation of beauty where there was ugliness, the performance of religious ritual, or conversation with 'spirits' by the tilting of tables. It is all so obvious that it is hard to conceive how the debate has been thus protracted. *Quot homines, tot sententiæ.* Each man seeks his own 'good.' The source of dispute appears to be in large part religion, in part the sheer preference of each type for its own ideal; whereas the ethical problem is, first and last, simply this:—

1. Upon what footing can we agree to limit or adjust our satisfactions in recognition of other men's rights? and

2. If we agree that the guiding principle should be to have regard to each other's 'welfare' or satisfaction, what is the sound and consistent course of action to that end?

So far is the principle of self-fulfilment from being scientifically denied that in our day, as in Plato's, we find the professed disparagers of 'pleasure' avowing as their ideal the 'realization of the rational self,' which is simply a definition of pleasure ethically purified. What general term, then, is to cover this and other satisfactions? Concessions appear to be fruitless. If we say 'happiness' instead of 'pleasure,' we are met by the Carlyles, who cry 'not happiness,

but blessedness'; and if we agreed to say 'blessedness,'[1] we should be finally met by those who insist that rightness is to be sought independently of any form of satisfaction, while they themselves claim to have the highest of all satisfactions in the consciousness of fulfilled duty.

In this imbroglio we have only a partial aid from Platonism: it never faced the dispute scientifically—could not do so, indeed, by reason of its fundamental limitations, and of the egoism which underlies all the Platonic literature. Nor did the defining genius of Aristotle at this point compass the issue, for, like Plato, he finally summarizes his ethic not as a generalization of the clash of self-seeking forces among men and a teaching that may help to compose them, but as a conception of the ideal life for the wise individual, who is conceived as a philosopher *in esse* or *in posse*.

Later Greek Ethics.

And this remains the characteristic of Greek ethic in all the various and interesting developments which followed on the fall of Greek liberty. The sheer output of writing and discussion during three centuries was immense; the intellectual and social advance quite problematic. This is the great historic confutation of the view of Socrates—really presented to him by the previous Sophists—that inquiries into physical nature were fruitless, but that men might hope to attain ere long a science of man and his affairs analogous to the attained mastery of arts and crafts. In point of fact, the great astronomical school established at Alexandria under the Ptolemies did achieve great results in astronomy; and, had the Greek brain devoted to the 'mechanical' sciences half the effort it spent through successive centuries on the inconclusive re-discussion of à priori ethics, it might conceivably have reached results which would have modified the social structure, and so set up a possibility of a reconstructive ethic.

But this was not to be. The great Archimedes of Syracuse (B.C. 287–212), much as he seems to have delighted in his mechanical discoveries, regarded them, in the fatal spirit of the ancient aristocrat, as beneath the dignity of the mathematical and geometric science of which he was so signal a master; and they were applied, if at all, only for purposes of war—he himself perishing in the siege of

[1] Mr. R. A. P. Rogers (*Short History*, p. 23) proposes 'well-being' as a standing equivalent for *εὐδαιμονία*. This, if accepted, would do very well. But 'well-being' is often used to indicate economic comfort.

Syracuse by the hand of a brutal Roman mercenary against the orders of the Roman general. The episode typifies the whole tragedy of the ancient civilization, in which, for lack at once of political science and ethical wisdom, the animal energies took the upper hand by way of military despotism, till they in turn were paralysed for lack of mind, and the whole fabric fell to ruin before the newer and blinder animal energies of barbarism.

Already, in Plato's day, as we have seen, Greek society was a sphere in which an idle dialectic life for the cultured few rested on a system of slavery; and the results of Alexandrine and Roman imperialism were realized in a fixation of that state of things. What cultured life remained was a matter of perpetual intellectual expatiation upon the old lines, with the social structure taken for granted; and the various philosophical schools founded in the last age of freedom did but yield modifications and elaborations of the older lore. They are all specializations of positions or tendencies in the pre-Socratic, Socratic-Platonic, or Aristotelian ethic; and the variations begin with the Cynics and Cyrenaics, alongside of the aged Socrates, and in divergence from Plato and Aristotle. On one side the 'Cyrenaics,' so named from their leader, Aristippus of Cyrene (fl. 400–365 B.C.), emphasize the fact that all men seek 'pleasure,' and that the rational choice and pursuit of pleasure are the end and aim of intelligent life, to which all virtues and excellences are but means. On the other hand, the 'Cynic' school (named or nicknamed for no certain reason),[1] led by Antisthenes, elected to denounce Pleasure as an evil, refusing to associate it with Virtue because the pursuit of it so often led men the other way; while Pain, as tending to promote Virtue, was a potential Good.

It is customary to affiliate these developments to Socrates, on the assumption that they followed his method of inquiry; but the evidence goes to show that they were as spontaneous outcrops as his from the Greek situation. Antisthenes expressed more strongly a tone or temper found in both Plato and Aristotle, and just as natural in one way as pleasure-worship on the other. There is a story of Socrates sneering at Antisthenes for a parade of ascetic poverty in the form of a tattered cloak; and later stories of Diogenes indicate a very pomp of destitution, a vanity of indigence, as far removed from ethics in any sense as the pride of riches. But this quality of being inapplicable to the social situation, as we have seen, was equally characteristic of the other schools of Athenian thought;

[1] Probably, however, from the fact that Antisthenes taught in a gymnasium called the Cynosarges, outside Athens.

and Cynicism undoubtedly was a 'school of character' of which the extravagances of Diogenes give no fair idea.

Stoicism and Epicureanism.—It was, in fact, the nursery of Stoicism,[1] the school founded by Zeno (340–265 B.C.), in some respects the most striking embodiment of both Greek and Roman ethics in a period of decadence, among men gravely concerned to dignify life by reasoned conduct in so far as freedom of life was left to them. To this day the word 'stoicism' carries a certain tonic ring of fortitude, which testifies to the manhood of those who built up the lore. On the other hand, the Cyrenaic doctrine was purified by Epicurus (341–270 B.C.)—not that it was really gross, but that it might easily become so—into a teaching which philosophically presented Pleasure, as Plato and Aristotle had done, as something centring in mental states; but refusing to bar any form of it save in so far as it was not finally conducive to mental peace and well-being. In *ataraxia* or freedom from perturbation, accordingly —an ideal taken from Democritus—Epicurus placed the Good which other men had identified with Virtue. This system, still so often vulgarly misrepresented as a cult of appetite, is on the whole the most coherently scientific that has come down to us from antiquity. By founding on the monistic atomic theory of Democritus, which at once excluded theology (his idle 'Epicurean Gods' having no relevance whatever to his system), he made ethics a matter of rational human choice. It was doubtless by way of guarding very specially against the oriental fatalism which could fasten on a strictly naturalist view of the universe that Epicurus went back on his theory of quite lifeless atoms fortuitously colliding, to a conception of the atom as having in it the potentialities of life and mind. To this, for his moral purpose, he added a logically crude doctrine of 'Free' Will, when all his theory required was a recognition of Will as immanent in Life. It only needed the acceptance of the evolution idea (thrown out by Empedocles) to make his system about as complete an outline-formula of scientific Monism as science has yet reached; and even his formal retention (probably prudential) of the God-idea in an atrophied form did not prevent his doctrine from having a great illuminating and freeing power for the educated Græco-Roman world after him. In delivering men from the superstitious fears which were the main residuum of all religions (Socrates had cherished them), he was held by his followers to have done mankind a matchless service, and Lucretius gave him a splendid tribute of thanks.

[1] Name derived from *Stoa*, the Porch or piazza in which Zeno taught.

It might seem likely that two such systems, aiming at a moral ideal, would have attained to more of mutual comprehension and adjustment than is indicated in the common Stoic charge against the Epicurean of wrongly esteeming pleasure, when the real issue was simply as to what kind of pleasure (in the sense either of 'that which pleases' or of 'the state of being pleased') was to be preferred, and why. But both schools 'swore by the word of the Master,' and the doctrines met only to clash. Chrysippus (B.C. 280–207), whom Aulus Gellius calls the *princeps* of the Stoic philosophy, and whom others called its main pillar, put his finger on the central paradox of ethics only to emphasize the collision. "Nothing is more absurd," he wrote, "than the opinion of those people who think there can be good without evil; for, goods being the contrary of evils, each is necessary to the other, and they are as if connected by opposition. There can be no contrary without the other."[1] This important proposition is a doctrinal statement of the point as put by Socrates in the PHÆDO, at the end of his life, with no such ethical application as might have been expected; and Chrysippus seems only to put it by way of confuting the people who urge the constant presence of evil as an argument against theism. Like Plato, he refuses to face the dilemma as to how deities who, as he says, found evil inseparable from the material of nature, can be regarded as super-natural. The Gods of the Stoic are really, on this view, as powerless as those of Epicurus; but he must verbally acclaim them as the rulers of all things.

Had Chrysippus (who is reported also to have said that "the wise man is as necessary to Zeus as Zeus to the wise man") been contented to put the theistic thesis aside with the conundrum, he might have reached the dialectic resolution of the strife in the query: "Since evil is immanent in the nature of things, and the good we collectively seek lies in the removal or avoidance of certain more or less avoidable evils, can we not agree as to the man-made evils which we may rationally seek to eliminate?" But though Chrysippus was something of an eclectic, accepting ideas from other schools, he seems to have chosen rather to hold by the Stoic paralogism that evils are goods, since they are the condition of good, and that thus there is no real evil in nature[2]—the contradiction not only of his own premiss but of his own criticism, since, if evil is good as being the condition of good, absurdity is right as being the condition of perceived rightness in reasoning, and the anti-theists were his logical benefactors.

[1] Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticæ*, vi, 1.

[2] Epictetus, *Encheiridion*, c. 27.

In Epictetus, who combines the moral rectitude of his school with its intellectual obliquity, we get the flat ethical counter-sense, embraced by Christianity, that it is his duty to the Gods "to wish that everything may happen as it does"[1]—this when his whole task in life was to teach men to act better, and to blame many for acting as they have done. Out of that logical dilemma there is no way; since if we say, "it is our duty, after trying to reform them, to be resigned to men's misconduct, because the Gods evidently decree it," he has only impeached the Gods anew. The Epicurean managed better by putting them out of action and prescribing adaptation to the inevitable.

By reason of its rigid à priori attitude on virtue—a blend of popular intuitionism and theistic pietism—Stoicism early became entangled in a net of verbal contradictions, claiming to 'live according to nature' and yet refusing to call anything good (albeit it was 'desirable') which was not in the mode of Virtue = self-denial, or anything evil which was not in the mode of self-indulgence. Thus pain, disease, and bereavement being declared to be not evils, because they promoted virtue, they were not even to be sorrowed over, so that the very Pain in virtue of which they were to be good was in effect declared not to exist. Epictetus, charging Epicurus with missing the essence of friendship in his theory while cherishing it in practice, came himself to feel bound not to grieve when a friend died. Reviewing the endless debate, which lasted for whole centuries, we can see that the ethical sects, like religious sects and political factions, tended to become spontaneously tribalist, fighting for the party doctrine as men fight for their tribe, their side, 'their country right or wrong.'

This historic fact is in itself an ethical phenomenon that should be considered. The moral or dialectic strife is a manifestation of elements of humanity involved in the vast series of physical strifes from the dawn of the species; it belongs to the nature of the cosmos that men should babble bitterly as to what is right. In the case of Greece a special lead to debate was given by the suppression of the other modes of normal conflict after the fall of self-government. Men who were denied a political arena made an intellectual one, and battled the more irreconcilably in that because there was no 'end' in action to which agreement might be turned. In the lack of the endless outlook of practical science debate substantially *constituted* the intellectual life. Take that away and the debaters would be at

[1] Arrian's *Discourses of Epictetus*, bk. i, c. 12.

a dead stand. So the Greeks made an intellectual life out of their very destitution; and the mental habit thus set up subsisted well into the official Christian era, the Christian theologians conflicting as the moralists had done before them. Greeks fought inveterately over words and theses so long as there was any mental capacity left in the stock, so to speak.

It was in a quite friendly spirit that the Roman proconsul Gellius, the friend of Cicero, called the Athenian philosophers together and urged upon them that if they did not want to spend their whole lives in disputation they might contrive to come to an agreement, in which he would do his best to help.[1] It was an anticipation of the despairing appeal of Constantine, centuries later, to the wrangling Christian bishops and sects to come to an understanding about revealed truth. As Constantine feared, only too justly, that a perpetual strife among the mouthpieces of deity as to what deity said or wanted would promote unbelief, so Gellius feared that philosophy would come into disrepute as a mere eternal debate leading to no settlement. Gellius seems to have thought that there might be a voluntary *pax philosophica*, analogous to the *pax Romana*. It was not to be; skepticism accordingly flourished in due proportion; and the later skeptics, not the least notable of the post-Socratic, Greek thinkers, seem to have 'dree'd the weird' of strife to the extent of flaunting the flag of skepticism for argument's sake rather than with any wish to reach certainties.

They, too, had developed from seeds sown by the great independent Greek thinkers of the pre-Socratic period. For Cicero "nearly all the ancients" had professed a deep skepticism as to the possibility of real knowledge; and he cites Democritus, Anaxagoras, and Empedocles as having taught that nothing could be perceived or known (*sc.* as it really was), Democritus in particular having declared that truth was submerged in the deep.[2] The academic Arcesilas (fl. 299–241 B.C.) carried the process of challenge to the length of denying the possibility of the knowledge which Socrates limited himself to seeking; this not in a frivolous fashion but by way of insisting on an intellectual ethic which few men practised, an abstention from belief in the unproved, since "nothing could be more disgraceful than the giving of assent and approval before cognition and perception."[3] The later skeptics Ænesidemus (fl. 80–50 B.C.) and Sextus Empiricus (fl. 175–205 C.E.) skilfully developed the systematic skepticism of Pyrrho (fl. 335 B.C.); but at no stage

[1] Cicero, *De Legibus*, i, 20 (53). [2] *Academica*, i, 13. [3] *Id. ib.*

was such skepticism accompanied by a constructive effort to establish tested truth as such, and it availed for very little against the confident dogmatism which appealed alike to 'common sense' and general religious tradition.

Stoicism, lacking direction from scientific thought, and holding (with Socrates) by the superstitions of divination, always remained relatively religious in cast, and correspondingly incoherent in philosophy. A logically ethical theism is inconstructible. But Stoicism appealed to whatever there was of emotional reforming bias in its world; and such Stoic types as Epictetus the lame slave and Marcus Aurelius the emperor will bear comparison as characters, if not as thinkers, with any teacher of any race or time who preceded them. If Marcus, trained to work imperialism, punished Christians for mere dissent (a doubtful point), he did but illustrate the warping effect of all theism on ethical judgment and practice. As has several times been remarked, however, there was probably no great difference in practice between a good Stoic and a good Epicurean.[1] The Stoic's rule of living according to nature easily coincided with the Epicurean maxim of avoiding perturbation; the Stoic no less than the other sought tranquillity; and the Epicurean, seeking it, had to practise both self-denial and fortitude, though the average Epicurean was probably a happier man than the average Stoic. Many of their maxims coincided; and it belonged to the fanatical side of Epictetus to attack Epicurus as if his doctrine were one of mere bodily satisfactions.

Concerning both there is some difficulty in ascertaining their doctrine: either, as seems likely, they were alike entangled in contradictions, or they were misrepresented. According to Epictetus, Epicurus taught that "there is no natural fellowship among rational animals"; while on the other hand Epicurus and his adherents lived in common without any contract; and the Master taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Epicurus's doctrine of *ataraxia*, the quest of painlessness or imperturbability, is obviously, like Aristotle's doctrine of the Mean, no complete ethical guide or standard, and is only partly a prudential one, for a man may be much perturbed at remembered inaction; and Epictetus, who is at one time represented by Arrian as scolding Epicurus for counselling men against marrying and having children,[2] at another figures as teaching that the ideal Stoic-Cynic must be as it were a priest, without family cares.[3]

[1] Prof. W. L. Davidson, *The Stoic Creed*, 1907, p. 206; Grote, *Aristotle*, App. v, p. 655 Wundt, *Ethical Systems*, p. 28. [2] *Discourses*, bk. i, c. 23. [3] Bk. iii, c. 22.

The two systems, the antagonism between which was largely a matter of religious animosity on the Stoic side, are alike to be understood as divergent expressions of temperamental recoil from the frightful vicissitudes of an age in which on all sides the nations were being broken to pieces by conquests, with no semblance of security save in the all-grinding autocracy of Rome. To rate Epicurus for counselling men to leave politics alone is to forget that in his day liberty was at an end, and politics a matter of cringing to the despot. It has been said that Epicureanism, however attractive, was not a system for a State or even for a community, but an ideal for the individual. But this, as we have seen, is substantially true of all the preceding ethical systems of Greece, even the Socratic-Platonic having only an extravagant Utopian framework for an ethically ruled society. And it is equally true of the Stoic creed and the Christianity which followed in the wake of the general ruin. Fanaticisms are formally even anti-social; and sectarianism tends to be so in essentials. But no 'Pagan' movement could compare in Judaic separatism with the Christian Church; and the serious Epicurean and the cultured Stoic were not ethically far apart from each other or from the ethics of the surviving Academics and Peripatetics. Marcus Aurelius looked up to and quoted Epicurus. And the longer the Roman despotism lasted, the more would they approximate.

This means, of course, that Stoic and Epicurean alike, in general, held the concrete ethical standards of antiquity. Epictetus is credited with denouncing the practice of child exposure, the terrible survival of the primary savage expedient of infanticide; though he is represented as speaking contemptuously of the begetting of children.[1] We are told, however, that when one of his friends—*i.e.*, a Stoic—was going to expose a child on account of his poverty, Epictetus adopted the child, and took a woman into his house to bring it up.[2] Here was a crime, as we regard it, treated as permissible to a good man, but to be deprecated on an impulse of humanity. In the Græco-Roman world, that position was not transcended. In the HEAUTONTIMORUMENOS of Terence, the personage who utters the famous saying, *Homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto*, "I am a man, and count nothing alien to me that is human," has just before insisted on exposing his child.

Such a practice, and such an attitude to it, might once for all give pause to those who in modern times have argued for an innate

[1] *Discourses*, bk. iii, c. 22. [2] Simplicius, *Comm. on Epictetus*, c. 46.

and immutable morality. The ancient practice, like that of the savage of all ages, was a simple adaptation to economic pressure. Official Christianity, adopting the contrary code of the Jews, made especially philoprogenitive by their national fate of dispersal, in effect set up the ethic of irresponsibility in parentage, putting no restraint on the begetting of children by parents who could not feed them; but, finding that a veto on the sale of children into slavery by their parents stimulated infanticide, had to permit the selling.[1] The practice of exposure had legally existed at Athens in the day of Plato and Aristotle; and, while Aristotle proposes[2] retardation of the age of marriage for men, and, where necessary, abortion, Plato-Socrates in THE REPUBLIC[3] plans for systematic infanticide as regards the children of the inferior multitude, without a word of demur from the interlocutors, who are equally complacent as to promiscuity — all this by way of attaining 'justice.' For that staggering problem the later ethical schools proposed no common solution at all, leaving the matter to individual discretion.

For, however they might seem to conflict in their conceptions of 'The Good,' they were all strictly at one in that they not only saw it as an individual state but had no plan of reconstruction for society. Epictetus preached, as against the Epicureans, attention to public affairs; but he had no light on the social problem. The Stoics, doubtless, were in a manner opposed to slavery in respect of their doctrine, derived from the old notion of the Cosmos as a well-schemed whole, that all men are born equal; but that principle too was held in a self-regarding sense, the theoretic application of it being merely that if all men lived 'according to Nature' no master would be maleficent and therefore no slave disobedient. With such systems to educate the 'educated' minority, the sinking and insalvable Græco-Roman civilization preserved what it could of human grace and dignity till the whole devitalized structure crashed down before invading barbarism, and the Christian Church, joining hands with that, took in charge the re-barbarized ethic of an unphilosophic world.

It is noteworthy that, in the absence of any hopeful outlook for civilized society as a process of free human expansion, the outstanding final phases of Greek philosophic thought before the State establishment of Christianity were theosophic. The men of reflective habit seem to have gradually lost hold of objective reality, and sought more and more to emulate Plato in constructing a subjective philo-

[1] Lecky, *Hist. of European Morals*, 6th ed. ii, 31.
[2] *Politics*, VII, xvi. [3] Bk. v, 460, 461.

sophy of the universe, in triumphant contempt of Protagoras's adamantine truth that "man is the measure of things." Of the historic past the Neo-Platonists seem to have had no critical conception, figuring that very much as they did their 'theised' universe, in terms of their mystical and mythical predilections. On their own day, on the political side of things, they had just as little hold. But even as we find estimable character in the more masculine Stoics, with all their incoherent theism, so we find ordered lives and humane spirits among the politically etiolated brooders who pored on the scrolls of once living Greece while eastern religion and western barbarism were on the way to overwhelm, in a new combination, the ancient polity that had lost the vital principle of self-government.

When, however, we approach the Christian period, it should be clearly realized that for the ancient world religion had predominated to the end.[1] Augustus did his utmost to re-establish religion in Rome; with the result that rationalism fell into abeyance,[2] and the mass was as pietistic as that of medieval Europe. In Greece they had always substantially remained so. The execution of Socrates, for instance, had been a religious act, the charge against him being that he did not worship the Gods publicly received, that he introduced new deities, and that he corrupted the youth. The essential untruth of the religious charge is clear, Socrates having always conformed and preached conformity. His advice as to consulting oracles and omens had apparently won for him an exceptional commendation from the hierophants of the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. As to the 'new Gods,' they were but a generalization from his pet mystical formula about the *daimon* or Good Spirit which guided him. On the other hand, gross and open disrespect to recognized Gods was shown with impunity by the orthodox and conservative Aristophanes in his plays. That the brave old wrangler should have been condemned to death on such a ground, and charged with 'corrupting youth,' is so revolting to enlightened modern feeling that the Athenians have been on that score regarded by many as corrupt hypocrites, whom only the memory of Christian heretic-burning restrained them from vilifying.

Hypocritical indeed the indictment partly was, though the doctrine of the *daimon* was really a flout to the average theology, and no doubt provoked resentment, as did the panegyric of the Delphic oracle-keepers. The impeachment is intelligible only as a

[1] See *A Short History of Freethought*, 3rd ed. i, 191–92, and refs. [2] *Id.*, pp. 208–215.

result of combined animosities: (1) that of many of the popular party on the score that Socrates had been a teacher of Critias and others of the Thirty, though when in power they had put him to silence; (2) that of those who had been irritated by his perpetual challenging of conventional opinion on non-religious matters; and (3) that of men like Anytus, whom he had privately and personally antagonized. But religion served all of his antagonists as technical ground of attack; and it could so serve only by reason of the predominance of religious belief in Athenian life. The mass of the Athenians were always religious, believing in Athênê as Christians later did in the Virgin Mary; and in Zeus and the rest as Christians believed in the Trinity. And withal they connected their religion with their morality as Christians do.

It would indeed be a bad result of our inquiry if we should end with a self-righteous verdict against 'the Greeks' of defect of moral feeling. There is proportionately about as much stupid malice and blatant moral ignorance in any civilized capital to-day as there was in Socratic Athens; at least, if there be more of moral sanity and science, there are, as Gladstone would say, 'enormous masses' of moral darkness. It is chiefly in respect of its rarer resort to the death punishment that the modern world differs in this connection from the ancient. Socrates could not have been condemned to death in England to-day, but he might have been worse libelled by the London Tory Press than he was by Aristophanes if he were re-incarnated to discuss English affairs. And it is only a century and a-half since the execution of Admiral Byng in England parodied the judicial crimes of the Athenians, in a fashion conspicuously more brutal than the administration of the hemlock.

The Birmingham mob which in 1791 wrecked the house of Priestley; the Birmingham mob which in the time of the Boer War yearned to kill Mr. Lloyd George, and which not twenty years later adored him, are not plausibly to be computed morally superior to the Athenian *bourgeoisie* who decreed by a majority vote that Socrates should die. Nor is the normal political life of any European country conspicuously more scrupulous, more intellectually honest, or even less self-seeking, than that of ancient Athens, though the sheer pressure of widened democracy supplies controls of mutually reacting self-interest which progressively secure better the interests of the majority. The more moral character of the results is rather a consequence of the better machinery, established by the constant play of natural self-interest, than of any general purification of ethical ideas. The modern Critias has perforce to conform to the

non-sanguinary practice of Theramenes; but the latter worthy has many modern congeners. And the World War was possible only in a world in which the spirit of Greek Imperialism was still potent.

Modern Europe is so far nearer a 'new moral world' than were the Greeks that it has long since, through sheer economic development, got rid of slavery. It needed, however, a terrible civil war to abolish that institution in the United States in the nineteenth century, slavery there having a strong economic basis, as in Greece. Trials for witchcraft, which abounded in the seventeenth century, ceased only in the eighteenth; and that record is not to be matched for horror in the annals of Greece. The last judicial murder for religion's sake in Britain occurred in Scotland in 1697; but there were frightful cases in France and Spain in the eighteenth century; and that of Ferrer, in Spain, is so recent as 1909. European civilization, too, with all its advances in scientific knowledge and ethical thought, is in several aspects uglier than the Greece that failed. Not from any conning and application of Grecian doctrine, certainly, can we hope to gather a wisdom which shall transfigure our world for us. Rather our lesson is that we must find some wisdom they lacked. But he who, in studying their lore, realizes the coercive power of their inherited conditions, their nearness to barbarism, their lack of real knowledge of the world's past, will be apt to feel that what such minds failed to compass will not be an easy achievement for any age.

And, in point of fact, we shall find their theses playing a large part in the ethical philosophy of the modern world. It is the spirit of Stoicism that inspires the ethical doctrine of Spinoza and Kant; the formula of 'the moral end' that has latterly been most widely current in English ethics is but a modification of the formulas or conclusions of Plato and Aristotle; and modern scientific Hedonism is but a deepening and broadening of the teaching of Epicurus. And though in the modern world the fundamental issues evaded by the philosophers of antiquity are being faced and discussed, it cannot be said that any ethical system, as apart from empirical Socialism, has yet been framed with an eye to their solution.

Chapter II

ROMAN ETHICS

It is common ground that Roman ethic, so far as it took literary form, is a derivation from the Greek, the Roman community having had practically no literature beyond that of folk-lore and priest-ritual when it came in conquering contact with Greek civilization. Even the ethics of Quintus Sextius (first century B.C.), so often extolled by Seneca, was not only a reproduction of Greek Stoicism, but actually written in Greek; the doctrine of Epicurus early found many Roman adherents; and C. Mausonius Rufus, who taught the enslaved Epictetus at Rome, taught him Greek philosophy. But in some such way all culture, especially ethical, is derivative or commentatory; and the form taken by Greek ethic in the Roman assimilation has its special historical interest. Many Romans, indeed, became simple partisans of what they read in Greek; there is no more striking picture of sociological reaction than the reverent attitude of the cultured men at Rome in the last age of the Republic towards the Greek past.[1] But there was inevitably adaptation. Thus Sextius added to his Stoic doctrine of frugality, temperance, and fortitude (*clamans 'hac itur ad astra'*[2]) a condemnation of meat-eating as conducive to cruelty and luxury and disease[3]—a veto not much needed in Greece. And Cicero not only criticizes the chief Greek systems, but often claims to give his own turn to what he accepts.[4]

As Rome is the greatest instance in the ancient world of political collapse through failure of moral adaptation in the State, we turn to Cicero with a special interest in his attitude on that problem. It indicates not so much conscious pessimism, such as we can read between the lines in Plato and Aristotle, as an uneasy anxiety not to be pessimistic save in respect of the evil propensities of the Cæsars and the Antonies. On the fundamental problem of the policy of the piratical Republic, extorting tribute from all the subject peoples and increasingly bent on making conquest universal, Cicero seems never to have let himself doubt. Personally just not only in the spirit of the Roman lawyer but in virtue of a spirit of reciprocity which made

[1] See Cicero, *De Finibus*, i, 1–3. [2] *Seneca*, ep. lxxiii, 15.
[3] Teuffel's *Hist. of Rom. Lit.* Eng. tr. i, 554, and refs.
[4] *De Officiis*, i, 2, end; *De Finibus*, i, 2; *Tusc. Disp.* i, 1.

him the kindly friend of his intelligent slave Tiro, he was concerned in exposing some of the gross iniquities of Roman governors, and could not but see that these were tending to become normal. His own scrupulously legal and even considerate administration of Cilicia for a little over a year yielded him £22,000. What, then, were governors in general doing?

He can no more face the problem of the *imperium* than could the Greeks face that of slavery. In the fragments preserved or echoed from Cicero's DE REPUBLICA by Lactantius we can see that he knew how some Greeks and others saw the history of Roman aggrandizement as a mere career of international robbery,[1] in which all the moral pretences were fraudulent. But Cicero will not see that any such indictment lies. He will not challenge the ethic of conquest, provided he can put a technical case for the conqueror. Rome, by his account, has become mistress of the world through faithfulness to her allies. He was as sure as any other Roman that Carthaginians were faithless and Romans truthful; though in Livy and Polybius the actual evidence goes mostly the other way.[2]

Rightly enough, Cicero urged in his DE REPUBLICA that no State can subsist at all without justice of some kind: it was the original strong contexture of reciprocal right between free citizens, and of that gradually set up in the political system between classes, that made Rome an aggregate vigorous enough to extend its dominion as it did. But the second essential element in Roman expansion was sheer organization; and when that organization was more and more systematically turned to the subjection and financial enslavement of the rest of the civilized and semi-civilized world, morality of relation with other communities as such fell to a minimum, with an inevitable reaction on the morality of the Romans in regard to each other. A one-sided process of moralization went on in the progressive provision for the plebeians, who extorted political rights step by step, and at the same time obtained some share in the conquered lands. But this only made the whole community partners in plunder; and in their case as in smaller experiments the honour that subsists among thieves proved precarious.

In Cicero's day, the patriciate at home, built up and enriched by many conquests, expected that the generals who made the conquests should remain as subservient to the State as those of the early days, themselves part of the home community. But already the savage

[1] There is some reason for suspecting that the famous speech of Carneades at Rome, which moved Cato to have him expelled for assailing morality, was a subtle exposure of the immoralism of the Roman State.

[2] Cp. F. W. Newman, *Miscellanies*, 1869, pp. 281, 295.

rivalries of Marius and Sulla had shaken the Republic to its foundations; and Sulla's re-establishment of the constitution on a conservative basis could not possibly avert repetitions of such civil convulsion. A general like Cæsar, who maintained and enriched himself by many years of conquest in Gaul, was not going to put himself tamely in the power of a home aristocracy many of whom were bent on impeaching him. Cicero was as resentful as the rest at Cæsar's firm regard to his own interest; and never seems to have asked himself why Cæsar should treat the State better than he and the State had treated other communities. He held that the law of reciprocity should operate strictly within an artificial line when it had been regarded by all as substantially non-existent outside that line. The inevitable end was a military despotism which maintained itself by a more or less sagacious policy, making itself and its conservation the measure of all right. And the inevitable end of that was universal decadence among all the emasculated peoples. The fall of Rome is the standing vindication of the law of natural morality.

Until modern times, the world has been divided between the Dantean political ethic which glorified Cæsar and execrated, not merely as men but as politicians, those who assassinated him, and the contrary 'republican' ethic which glorified Brutus; though it is matter of history, established by Cicero, that Brutus was a conscienceless usurer, who extracted an enormous interest (48 per cent.) from the people of Salamis, and whom Cicero himself was unable to restrain within the bounds of decency in his extortion. The two positions were alike fallacious. The Brutuses were men for whom justice was a mere maintenance of the form of State that iniquitously enriched them. And though Cæsar was in many respects as much more humane as he was more intelligent than the other patricians, he was no more capable than they of placing the State on a sound basis. Had he not been assassinated, it must have developed very much as it did.

Standing as he did towards Cæsar and Brutus, Cicero as a moralist could at best only elaborate a dogmatic ethic more or less on the Stoic lines. In the DE FINIBUS BONORUM ET MALORUM ('Concerning the Ends of Goods and Evils') he exhibits the sceptical side of his intelligence (very much in evidence in his treatise ON THE NATURE OF THE GODS) in a series of nominal dialogues in which, by different speakers, the system of the Epicureans is forensically overthrown by the arguments of the Stoics, and that of the Stoics in turn by the arguments of the Academics and the

Peripatetics. Epicurus is conventionally assumed to mean by pleasure only sensual satisfaction; but the Stoics are sharply challenged for limiting the names and concepts of happiness and unhappiness to results accruing only from virtuous and vicious action and feeling. On this tack, Cicero maintains a common-sense eclecticism as to the idea of the Good; and we may suspect that it was mainly his calculated support of State religion that kept him outside of the Epicureans, among whom he had many friends. Though he declaims against the Epicurean terms, he is very much at the standpoint of the Peripatetics, who had posited *ataraxia*, the ideal of freedom from perturbation, like the Epicureans. And he has all Aristotle's concern for the judicious management of the existing State, with no thought of reconstructing it. Had Cæsar survived for ten years, we can almost conceive the aged Cicero settling down as an Epicurean, and resignedly letting Roman 'liberty' go the way of the liberties that Rome had wrecked elsewhere.

As it is, we find him in the TUSCULAN DISPUTATIONS, after the loss of his daughter, boasting as warmly as ever of the Roman past, and maintaining with the Stoics and the Socratics that there must be an overruling power which rights the wrongs and heals the sorrows of this world in another.[1] Cicero thus epitomizes in himself the course of the classical evolution in ethics. Most of what is wholesome as well as of what is arbitrary in it appears in one or other of his treatises; and in the DE OFFICIIS ('Concerning Duties') he puts the gist of it in a kind of manual for his son. There, as lawyer, he denies that there is any 'natural right,' right being conferred only by possession, by conquest, and by law or contract.[2] Thus for Cicero 'virtue' ceases to have any footing in the nature of things when any one challenges the existing legalized arrangements; and the sword is tacitly conceded to be the ultimate sanction. Yet in the same treatise he several times comes in sight of the fundamental problem, and, in his discursive and unsystematic way, puts some counsels of betterment; while in his treatise ON THE LAWS he insists that all law rests upon the primordial idea of justice, not *vice versa*.[3]

How far he owes any or all of these ideas to the Academic Panætius, whom, he avows, he is in general following, it is impossible to say; but it is evident that he found in Panætius an elaborate demonstration of the mutual dependence of men in all things, and

[1] *Tusc. Disp.* i, 49. [2] Bk. i, c. 7. [3] *De Legibus*, i, 4–16.

of the consequent expediency of a rule of reciprocity.[1] From Dicæarchus the Aristotelian (*fl. circa* 300 B.C.), too, he quotes the conclusion of an entire volume devoted to prove that all the loss of human life ever caused by the destructive forces of nature has been small in comparison with that inflicted by men on each other. And it appears to be from Panætius that he gets the proposition (of whose incompatibility with the other he shows no recognition) that the wronging of one's neighbour is of all things the most contrary to nature. It is evidently from Panætius again that he gets his chief moral postulate[2]:—

> Therefore there ought to hold for all one principle, that the advantage of each one singly and of all should be the same, since if any one should draw it to himself the whole human copartnery is dissolved. And if nature also prescribes this, that every one should consult the interest of every other, simply because he is a man, it necessarily follows according to the same nature that every utility is common. And if that be so, we are all included in the same law of nature. And if that be so, we are certainly forbidden by the law of nature to wrong another. The first being true, so is the last.

That the official Roman imperialist should thus unreservedly assent to the late Greek doctrine which in effect vetoes imperialism is very suggestive of the complete discontinuity of ethical consciousness which belonged to the Roman situation. No men, probably, were ever more voluble in the discussion and more confident in the assumption of virtue than those who collectively, with Cicero, flourished on the plunder that the Roman *imperium* brought them. Cicero repeatedly goes into raptures over the virtue of Regulus as the true and great model of conduct, the keeping of one's oath at any cost being the traditional Roman duty. At the same time he decides that it is licit to break one's sworn promise to pay ransom to a pirate, he being outlawed and the common enemy of all.[3] And, as regards the community of nations, he has no further notion of applying his principle than the stipulation for the observance of treaties. The vassalage of the nations he would firmly maintain.

Hardly more consistent is his conception of the community of interests within the State. His approving citation of the view of those who advise that slaves should be made wage-earners[4] dwindles from an ostensibly ethical to a merely economic precept when we find him discoursing to his son on the meanness of all wage-earning occupations, the taking of wages being an earnest of slavery.[5] The

[1] *De Officiis*, bk. ii, c. 5. [2] *Id.* bk. iii, c. 6
[3] *Id.* bk. iii, c. 29. [4] *De Off.* i, 13. [5] i, 42.

custom-house officers, functionaries of the State, he puts upon a level with usurers, as odious; and all *small* traders he holds in aristocratic contempt, as did ancient patricians in general. His practical ethic is thus but a vindication of Roman patrician usage, down to the gladiatorial combats, which he considers wholly from the point of view of the maintenance of the Roman tradition of military spirit, extolling them as a discipline in death for both combatants and spectators.[1] All this is for him part of the ideal of Virtue, which he eloquently pits against the Pleasure of Epicurus, blusterously denying that painlessness is pleasure, and uncandidly insisting that *hedonē* must be *voluptas*.

Bringing the matter to a practical issue, in a frequently heated reply to the temperate defence of Epicureanism by Torquatus, he cites on one hand the case of Lucius Thorius Balbus, who always kept himself in perfect physical condition, ate and drank well and wisely, was always cheerful, and died fighting for the republic, and on the other hand Regulus, whom the advocate roundly alleges to have been in his agony of hunger and sleeplessness "beatorem quam potantem in rosa Thorius"—happier than Thorius drinking on a couch of roses.[2] When we pause to ask ourselves whether Cicero showed even fair fortitude, to say nothing of beatitude, under trials much less crushing than those of Regulus, we feel that the rhetoric is hollow as sentiment, besides being wholly irrelevant to any practical theory of conduct. The ethical eloquence of Cicero, apart from his reproductions of Greek analyses of the virtues, has finally the effect of a pose.

His pronouncement that faith need not be keep with outlaws doubtless had reference to Cæsar, who, captured in his youth by pirates, faithfully paid them the ransom he had promised, and no less faithfully kept the other promise, of which they made no account, that he would put them to death.[3] Cæsar's ethic, it would seem, was more homogeneous, and on the whole perhaps more healthy, than that of Cicero. He avowed that had he been helped by robbers and cut-throats to power he would have rewarded them as he did his faithful friends.[4] Cicero fumes virtuously[5] over Cæsar's habit of quoting and acting on the saying of Eteocles in the *Phœnissæ* of Euripides: "If ever right is to be violated, it is for the prize of rule: in other things be strict." For the advocate, however he might declaim, there was no crime in conquest for plunder so long as the abstract entity of the conquering State was duly revered

[1] *Tusc. Disp.* ii, 17.
[2] *De Finibus*, ii, 20.
[3] Suetonius, *Julius*, c. 4.
[4] *Id.* c. 72.
[5] *De Officiis*, iii, 21.

by her sworders. Cæsar's ethic was one of loyalty to all who would be loyal to him, a frank reversion to the fundamentals of the prime: for him the mere constituents of the tyrant State had no sanctity on the score of tradition. Pitilessly wielding the Roman power for Rome's and his own aggrandizement, he brushed aside the ethic of duty to an aggregate which recognized no duty to him any more than to alien peoples. The natural counter-move was made by the daggers of the anti-Cæsarian senators. Thus came about the dissolution of the pirate polity in a tyranny in which Romans' rights were put on the common level of servitude.

In that state of things, however, there was wrought more progress in ethical thought than had been made in the day of ostensible liberty. Under Nero, Seneca exhibits a keener moral sense than Cicero's. When he declares the equality of man[1] he is either speaking sincerely or quoting one who felt strongly. In imperial Rome, as earlier in conquered Greece, subjection made men think more searchingly on conduct; and though Seneca is feverishly self-conscious, always feeling his moral pulse and fussing about being good and self-denying on an excessive income, he is possessed by sympathies that had only begun to be heard of in Cicero's time. He treats his slaves as members of the family,[2] and he detests the gladiatorial games,[3] which Cicero had justified against early protests. When we find Seneca equally detesting war and likening it to homicide,[4] we realize how the state of compulsory peace *emollit mores*, and how men's moral theories are primed by their practice. On the practical side of things—for he is little of a philosopher—Seneca propounds all the humanities of the coming Christian Fathers, without any of their savageries of dogma. And from the Epicurean poet Horace comes equally the cue of the modern utilitarians—the maxim that Utility is, as it were, *mater justi et aequi*,[5] the parent of justice and equity—a thesis set against the Stoic dogma, adopted by Christianity, that all sins are equal.[6]

The moralizing of Horace is indeed curiously suggestive of the persisting force of the moral spring in life, in the very midst of the wild immoralism of the robber empire.

> From fear of hurt first came the laws, you'll find,
> If you work out the origins of things:
> Nature puts no such line 'twixt right and wrong
> As 'twixt the pleasant and its opposite.

[1] *Epist.* xxxi, end. [2] *Epist.* xlvii. [3] *Epist.* vii, also xcv, 33. [4] *Epist.* xcv, 30.
[5] Hor. 1, Sat. iii, 98-124. The maxim, of course, was current before Horace. See Cicero, *De Leg.* i, 15. [6] Matt. v, 19-28; James, ii, 10.

Thus in four lines he gives the cue to Hobbes and the problem to all moralists; and for the rest he is as little concerned as the other Epicureans and Stoics around him to plan a new moral world. There is neither exultation nor misgiving in his tranquil account of the latest acquisitions, the conquests of Cantabria and Armenia which bring new treasure, making golden Plenty pour on Italy fresh fruits from her horn.[1] Yet in his world of plutocrats and parasites, courtesans and slaves, he feels the pull of moral gravitation and composedly versifies the eternal rules of sane self-management, singing of the castle of the clear conscience, with no sense of guilt within, no sin to strike us pale.[2]

Strangely enough, too, it was at the hands of Roman lawyers of the days of the Empire that there was built up a body of law by which all subsequent jurisprudence has been conditioned; for the reason that the Roman jurists, following the lead of Cicero, took at least as their theoretic starting-point those conceptions of the natural equality of men and the universality of rights which had first been made current by the Stoics. The laws indeed maintained slavery; but the express avowal of its 'unnatural' character in the forefront of the code stood as an index, for a renascent age, of ideals of justice to which the ancient world could only aspire.[3] It was from the Roman jurists' dictum that Americans and Frenchmen took the declaration of principle which announced the birth of the two greatest modern Republics. And the fact that in the American case slavery was on foot when the declaration was made, and subsisted for three generations after, is a sufficient bar to any Pharisaic criticism of the ancient jurists. Posterity in turn may find that the modern formula of 'liberty, equality, fraternity,' was but an aspiration which was left for a later age to fulfil.

[1] 1 Epist., xii, end.

[2] *Id.* i, 61.

[3] Maine puts the service high: ".....The Natural Law of the Romans, which differed principally from their Civil Law in the account which it took of Individuals, and which has rendered precisely its greatest service to civilization in enfranchizing the individual from the authority of archaic society." *Ancient Law*, 9th ed. p. 258. "Politics, Moral Philosophy, and even Theology, found in Roman law not only a vehicle of expression, but a nidus in which some of their profoundest inquiries were nourished into maturity." *Id.* p. 340.

Chapter III

CHINESE ETHICAL DOCTRINES

The fact that most ethical manuals entirely ignore the ethical doctrines of the ancient Chinese is a reason for giving a short account of them even in a Primer. They are embodied in a language peculiarly difficult to translate; and, after a period of cordial recognition in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, have latterly been left a good deal to the discussion of patronizing missionaries; but they are on the whole as comprehensible as the ethics of Aristotle and Epictetus, and not less worth practical attention.

Confucius,[1] the great central figure of ancient Chinese literature, explicitly testifies to the existence before his time of standard collections of moral as of other lore; and it is hardly possible to know to what extent his thought is independent. On ethical matters, however, save as regards its devout acceptance of all precepts relating to filial reverence and funeral ceremonies—a teaching which connotes great antiquity—he appears to think critically; and his immense posthumous reputation with his own people implies a recognition of him as a creative thinker, as well as a great co-ordinator of ideas.

It might have been expected à priori, as well as in the light of subsequent Chinese life, that, like Aristotle, the ancient Chinese would attach high importance to the deportmental or self-regarding virtues, which must have been stressed in all the great civilizations of the East as they were in Greece and Rome. It is remarkable, however, that in the one record preserved of intercourse between Confucius and Lao-Tsze,[2] his great predecessor, the older man sharply oppugns the younger's regard for the practices and doctrines of antiquity. Those doctrines, like Lao-Tsze's own and those of the early sages of Greece, seem to have been current as gnomic sayings; and Lao-Tsze recalls his contemporary Heraclitus alike in his tone

[1] Latinized form of 'Kung-fu-tse'=Kung the Master. His full name is written K'ung Ch'in Chung-ni, the second being the first or personal and the third the name given on attaining manhood.

[2] 'The venerable teacher' or 'The old philosopher.' The family name was Lee, "with the honorific addition of Peh-Yang."

and in some of his doctrines. He, too, affirms the unity of contraries, making Existence and non-Existence (by which he may have meant Space) in this fashion one and the same. But he is specially significant for us in ethics in that he expressly posits the correlativity of good and evil, centuries before Chrysippus :—

> When in the world beauty is recognized to be beautiful, straightway there is ugliness. When in the world goodness is recognized to be good, straightway there is evil.[1]

The practical application in the context is obscure; but one rendering[2] makes it intelligible :—

> The sage, therefore, is occupied only with that which is without prejudice. He teaches without verbosity.....; he acts without regard to the fruit of action; he brings his work to perfection without assuming credit.

This would seem to promise a purely scientific handling of ethical as of other problems; but in the small collection of his aphoristic sayings Lao-Tsze figures really as a didactic moralist, though a notable one. His *Tau* (=The Way, or Reason=*Logos*),[3] it would appear, was a current conception long before his time; and it may be that some of his moral precepts were so. The doctrine (xxi) that "Virtue in its grandest aspect is neither more nor less than following *Tau*" approximates to the Greek ideal of Virtue as wisdom, bringing the higher happiness; but there is also a very pronounced doctrine (xlix, lxiii) of non-resistance to evil :—

> The good I would meet with goodness.
> The not-good I would also meet with goodness.
> Virtue is *good*.
>
> The faithful I would meet with faith.
> The not-faithful I would also meet with faith.
> Virtue is *faithful*.
>
> Recompense injury with virtue (kindness).

In point of fact, Lao-Tsze would seem to have reserved his unkindness for friends, as when he snubbed Confucius and disparaged (xviii, xix, xxxviii) his doctrine of compassion and justice. And this may have been in retaliation for Confucius's correction of the precept of indiscriminate kindness. To some one who put the maxim, "Recompense injury with kindness," that sage had once replied: "With what, then, will you recompense kindness? Recom-

[1] *Tao-teh-King*, ii, Chalmers's trans.
[2] That of W. G. Old. Chalmers's rendering, "The sage accordingly confines himself to what is without effort (not demonstrative)," seems to miss the mark.
[3] The reasons for translating *Tau* as 'God' are given by Major-General Alexander, in Pref. to his *Lao-Tsze, the Great Teacher*, 1895, p. x *sq.* It yields no intelligible theology. See, in particular, cap. xxxix, where 'God' and 'the Gods' are wholly disparate ideas.

pense injury with justice, and kindness with kindness."[1] Confucius, the administrator and practical reformer of methods of government, had regard to actual life; Lao-Tsze, apparently, to the ideal of the virtuous man. We know not whether he would have abolished the machinery of civic justice, and tried the experiment of letting every one do as he would: his general sagacity would seem to exclude the possibility that he could think such a course possible. It was, then, a positing not of an ethical rule, but of an ideal of conduct for a minority of persons having nothing to do with trade or industry, and no property to distract them.

The missionary criticism which (by way of illustrating Christian precepts) disparages the Confucian rule as 'below' the Christian does not seem concerned to award to Lao-Tsze the credit of inventing the latter. Christian experience offers no reason for supposing either that Lao-Tsze 'turned the other cheek' to any who smote him, or that any of the Taoists who founded on his book the very extensive and very superstitious sect of that name sought to apply his rule in practice. One translator[2] renders the forty-ninth chapter, above cited, in such a way as to imply that Lao-Tsze claimed to make men good by kindness:—

> In any case, I act with equal kindness to all, whether good or evil, and thus all become good. In like manner I equally accept truth and falsehood, and hence all become truthful.

But this appears to be a quite unwarranted expansion of the thought. The reasonable inference is that Lao-Tsze was propounding an ideal for the sage, probably current before him, and that Confucius, in rejecting it as Mencius later rejected the universalism of Mih Teih, was standing for a rule of life by which the mass of men could morally live in normal society. By such a rule, if by any, social life had already been regulated in China for thousands of years; for no race has lived so long under conditions of centralized or 'paternal' government as the Chinese. It is this immemorial prestige of a great polity that explains the reverent adherence of Confucius to the most ancient convention of filial obedience and funeral rites—a convention which he observed to the extent of sequestering himself for three years after the death of his mother—albeit with the solace of regular gymnastics. Any slackening of these observances he held to be ruinous to social life and personal character. But while he was thus a traditionist in regard to some of the most primitive norms of conduct, he had a quite rational

[1] *Analects*, bk. xiv, 36.
[2] Major-General Alexander, in work cited.

hold of the principle of human relations in general; and, while putting the self-regarding or deportmental virtues as high as they were put by Aristotle, he gave a clearer statement than Aristotle's of the primary rule of reciprocity. For him there did not exist the crux of a society founded on slavery.

> Slavery in ancient China appears to have been little developed till after the age of Confucius. The causation is somewhat obscure; but ancient China was apparently best cultivable by free labour when Egypt was cultivated by slave labour. (Cp. Miss Simcox, *Primitive Civilizations*, 1894, ii, 8.) Slavery appears to have developed considerably under the despotic Han Dynasty (between 200 B.C. and 220 C.E.), when war and famine brought great impoverishment on the lower orders, whose enslavement, however, does not appear to have made any great change in their way of life. (*Id.* p. 114.) But in the ancient period "very little indeed is heard of private slaves, who probably then, as now, were indistinguishable from the ordinary people, and were treated kindly. The callous Greek and still more brutal Roman system, not to mention the infinitely more cowardly and shocking African slavery abuses of eighteenth-century Europe and nineteenth-century America, have never been known in China; no such thing as a slave revolt has ever been heard of there" (Prof. E. H. Parker, *Ancient China Simplified*, 1908, p. 85).

His rule of reciprocity is put with practical sanity:—

> Tsze-Kung asked, saying, Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life? The Master said, Is not RECIPROCITY such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.[1]

Upon which the missionary commentators once more pronounce him to have fallen below the Christian ethic, which puts not a 'Do not' but a 'Do.' The wisdom of Confucius here needs little exposition. Rationally construed for ordinary life, the 'do not' is equivalent to the 'do,' as it bars negative no less than positive forms of unsociability. On any other interpretation the 'do' form of the maxim must mean either the precept of Lao-Tsze, which ignores all the problems of government, and which no Christian State has ever dreamt of acting upon, or it is a loose counsel which could as easily mean 'Do favours in order to reap favours' as anything else; and which, upon any interpretation, sets a hopeless dilemma to the man who is confronted by a crime.

Shall he assist the criminal to escape, on the score that he

[1] *Analects*, xv, 23.

himself would like to be allowed to escape if he had committed the crime? Common sense, like law, has always decided that criminal acts bar the precept, save in so far as it may point to a humane treatment of the criminal—a course not historically taken upon Christian motives and unknown in Europe in the ages of faith, though it was prescribed by pagan Greeks and has been striven for by modern rationalists. But when the Golden Rule is thus rationally limited, every ground for the pretence of its superiority to that of Confucius disappears.

The real difficulty about that rule is not in inducing most people to behave obligingly to their equals: that end is commonly secured without any resort to gospel sanctions; the problem is to get them to apply it to all the human relations, the indirect and distant as well as the direct and near; and, last but not least, the domestic as distinguished from the social. Selfish coercion and repression of children by parents, for instance, goes on largely still; and in China the rule of the male, making the son master over the mother at the father's death, is added to the primordial mastery of the husband. Confucius, with his eyes fixed on ancient practice, does not seem to have noted these conditions of evil; though he is credited with an odd rule for loving relatives in a diminishing degree with their distance in kinship.[1] It must be said for him, however, that he took special pains to apply his principle of reciprocity in his relations alike to his superiors and to his inferiors;[2] and that as an administrator he was rigid in repressing aristocratic licence and in securing protection and good government for the toiling mass.

For the rest, he preserved the ancient leaning to the ideal of the virtuous sage, as distinct from that of the man concerned to benefit others:—

> Tsze-Kung said: Suppose the case of a man extensively conferring benefits on the people, and able to assist all, What would you say of him? Might he be called perfectly virtuous? The Master said: Why speak only of virtue in connection with him? Must he not have the qualities of a sage?[3]

If this should seem to the zealous altruist a deviation from his ideal, let him at least remember that here Confucius in effect was anticipating Kant's impossible maxim of acting so that our conduct may be a norm for all; and the current modern ideal of 'developing the rational self,' which with him is strongly stressed.[4]

In comparison with the Greeks of the Socratic age and the ethic

[1] *The Doctrine of the Mean*, xix, 5.
[2] See *The Great Learning*, x, 10; Legge's trans.
[3] *Analects*, vi, 28.
[4] *The Great Learning*, Text, 6.

of Judaism and Christianity, Confucius is seen to be essentially a rationalist and a humanist. Religion was for him an accepted convention, never a spring or guide of conduct :—

> Ke Loo asked about serving spirits of the dead. The Master said : While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve spirits ?[1]

All pretence of knowledge of the supernatural is tacitly barred by his doctrine :—

> When you know a thing, to hold that you know it, and when you do not know a thing, to acknowledge that you do not know it—this is knowledge.[2]

But in the great old Chinese world of unlettered ignorance no thought of eliminating traditional religion by direct negation was to be entertained ; and the higher intellectual life of China went on in as complete detachment from the life of the mass as it ever did in Athens.

In China as in Greece, however, there took place an extensive development of ethical discussion in the ages after it had been started by a teacher who won great posthumous renown. Confucius, like Plato, died [479 B.C.] chagrined at his failure to persuade princes to become philosophers, and unhopeful about the world's future. The evolution did not put him in the wrong. It may well have been that in the far-off days when China was ruled by an emperor who was a great engineer the lot of the mass of the people was happier than in the post-Confucian times, when feudalism collapsed into despotism. In no ancient history do we find more traces of ideal kings, anxious shepherds of their people ; but alike dukes and despots in the later ages conformed to the general standards of ancient and medieval Europe. Treacherous princes seem to have been proportionally as numerous as criminal types in any other class. The great Chinese polity subsisted as no other human polity has done ; but, though it has pedestalled Confucius from almost the day of his death, it has not, in the total absence of self-government, attained to anything like his ideal of good life.

In the ages immediately after him the increasing stress of the moral problem is seen in the new literature. On the one hand we have the rigorously pessimistic doctrine of Yang Choo, and on the other the gospel of universal love by Mih Teih (or Meh-Ti),[3] two philosophers who flourished in the period between Confucius and

[1] *Analects*, xi, 11. [2] *Id.* ii, 17.
[3] This transliteration, which would seem to give the English pronunciation, is used by Alexandra David in her French work, *Socialisme chinois*, Londres, 1907.

Mencius. Yang Choo's doctrine, shockingly misrepresented by Dr. Legge, is as it were an expansion of that of the book of ECCLESIASTES and of the Psalmist's saying about the wicked spreading himself like a green bay-tree. Sombrely he recites the histories of the great administrators and kings whose lives were worn out in joyless public service, contrasting them with those of the powerful egoists who ate, drank, and were merry to the end. The moral is that extreme virtue is without reward, and vice frequently triumphant.

> The missionary is compelled to confess that much of the language is identical with that of Ecclesiastes; but contends that "those thoughts [Eccles. i, 18; ii, 14–17, 21–24; iii, 19–22] were suggestions of evil from which the Hebrew Preacher recoiled in his own mind; *and he put them on record only that he might give their antidote along with them.* He vanquished them by his faith in God; *and so* he ends by saying, 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter.—Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.' Yang Choo has no redeeming qualities. His reasonings contain no elements to counteract the poison that is in them. He never rises to the thought of God.....It is the same with all at death. There their being ends. After that there is but so much putridity and rottenness. *With him therefore the conclusion of the whole matter is:* 'Let us eat and drink; let us live in pleasure; gratify the ears and eyes; get servants and maidens, music, beauty, wine; when the day is insufficient carry it on through the night; EACH ONE FOR HIMSELF.'"[1]

As a matter of fact, in the whole transcript Dr. Legge has given from Yang Choo there is not the slightest justification for this ascription to him of a doctrine of debauchery; nor is there any historic pretence that Yang Choo was a debauched person. He describes debauchery *as* debauchery, and self-sacrifice *as* self-sacrifice. He inculcates nothing; he is a pure pessimist. Even the phrase 'Each one for Himself' is not in the document as translated by Dr. Legge; it is his gloss, like the rest of the peroration. Yang Choo's *implicit* doctrine, if anything, is that of ECCLESIASTES: 'There is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works.'

The vindication of ECCLESIASTES which accompanies the vilification of Yang Choo is a memorable performance. It is tolerably certain that if that book had been found in Greek, outside the Canon, with no ascription to Solomon or any other Hebrew sage, it would have been denounced by Dr. Legge and

[1] *Life and Works of Mencius*, Prolegomena, pp. 97–98; ed. 1875.

his congeners as he denounces Yang Choo. The orthodox postscript, as a matter of fact, is recognized by considerate critics as probably a scribe's or editor's addendum. Had it been taken as part of the original, and that original as pagan, it would have been characterized by the Legges as a piece of gross hypocrisy. The pretence that a man can fitly put forth a large quantity of moral 'poison,' and can then convert that poison into good nutriment by adding a tag about fearing God and keeping the commandments, is one on which none save a pious polemist would have ventured. It in effect gives the palm of virtue to hypocrisy and fraud.

Rational criticism, happily, can recognize in ECCLESIASTES, despite tamperings, a sincere echo of Greek pessimism, and can sympathize with it as the honest utterance of the disillusionment that may come upon thinking men living in a world of violence and oppression. Substantially the same judgment falls to be passed upon the pessimism of Yang Choo. It is upon the crude sophistry of the Christian partisan that moral censure properly lies. It recalls the saying of Montaigne about the frequent combination of super-celestial professions with subterrestrial practice among the Catholic zealots of his day, and helps to explain the small headway made in China by Christian missions. Probably nothing but the religious motive could elicit such tactics on the part of a professed champion of morality.

The message of Mih Teih, on the other hand, is almost the last word of optimism. It is a simple-minded reiteration of the truism that if everybody loved everybody else as he does himself, and behaved accordingly, moral evil would *pro tanto* disappear from the world. Mih Teih is so far a philosopher that he does not fulminate a precept but explains that if everybody is equally[1] bent on doing kindnesses to every one else all will profit by their beneficence. The aged will get sustenance, and the orphan protectors; and nobody will ever commit a crime. Naturally, common sense raised difficulties, as the disciples record :—

> What can be the reason [asked Mih Teih] that the scholars of the empire, whenever they hear of this principle of universal love, go on to condemn it? Plain as the case is, their words in condemnation of this principle do not stop; they say: 'It may be good, but how can it be carried into practice?'
>
> Our Master said: 'Supposing that it could not be practised, it seems hard to go on likewise to condemn it. *But how can it be good and yet be incapable of being put into practice?*'[2]

The zealous argumentation which follows is exquisitely irrelevant

[1] There is some difficulty as to whether Mih Teih used the expression 'equally' either as to love or as to action; but it is obviously necessary to his position, and must be understood.

[2] Legge's *Mencius*, as cited, p. 109.

to the issue; but it is interesting as showing that some centuries before the Christian era heathen China did actually reason much over the precept of universal love. Chinese sanity of course recognized that the thing could not be done; that the well-meaning people could not in general contrive to love the ill-meaning; and that the latter would not even make the attempt. It seems hard, as Mih Teih says, that people should not only point this out but condemn the impossible doctrine. The condemnation, we may infer, was of the nature of the comment superfluously pressed by Mencius, that if we loved everybody alike we should treat our parents no better than we did any one else. Confucius, who felt so strongly about the antique reverence for parents, seems to have met either the doctrine of Mih Teih (who may have been his contemporary, and in any case was not long after him[1]), or that of Lao-Tsze or some other predecessor, with the argument before cited, which implies that to recompense injury with kindness is to encourage evil deeds. Mencius, who is least himself in his unsmiling censures of Yang Choo and Mih Teih, seems to have regarded, as Confucius on the whole did, any departure from the familial norm, with its special reverence for parents,[2] as a destruction of the social order; and he had the excuse that Mih Teih expressly wrote: "To practise filial piety in an exaggerated fashion is not virtue."[3]

The missionary, as usual, disparages the heathen ethic, finding it 'low' to found the doctrine of universal love on the principle of universal utility, instead of blankly fulminating a command without any attempt at persuasion, in the gospel manner. The gospel inculcations of humility for the sake of 'glory' and of faith for the sake of salvation are here ignored, as might have been expected. Mih Teih, it would be fair to say, really exhibited more faith in his own doctrine than has been shown by many Christian champions of the gospel precept, as well as much more conformity to it in practice than is exhibited by his missionary censor. It is told of him that he set his face against luxury, even against æsthetic enjoyments, on the ground that they cannot be universally shared.[4] And he seems to have had many followers, his vogue lasting for centuries, and probably long after the time at which Mencius is supposed to have discredited him. It seems doubtful, indeed, whether the teachings ascribed to him are not in large part accretions made by disciples to those of a master who contented himself with oracles in the manner of Lao-Tsze. Only a small portion of the ancient treatise (preserved

[1] A. David, *Socialisme Chinois*, as cited, pp. xv–xvi.
[2] Legge, as cited, p. 117.
[3] A. David, p. 109.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 87.

in a Taoist monastery) setting forth the doctrine of Mih Teih claims to be a textual reproduction of his words or writings;[1] and that is admittedly marked by obscurities. It includes the saying, 'A king is only a name.'

The impression of a widespread intellectual activity in China after Confucius is largely reinforced by the remains of his greatest successor, Mencius.[2] From various sources indeed we realize that there were in those ages many teachers with schools of disciples who presumably paid fees as did those of the Greek sophists, though we get no details on this head. And there are no apparent reasons for doubting that such teachers were in general sincere and serious men. Mencius in particular is always exhibited as public-spirited in a high degree. We oftenest hear of him as telling more or less plain truths to kings, upon whom he always impresses his great principle that if the people are kindly ruled they will do anything for their ruler; and that the truly benevolent king can attract to himself all the world.

Such optimism makes more surprising the attack of Mencius upon the optimism of Mih Teih. The solution is that in Mencius the two moral impulses (1) to beneficence in administration and (2) to the maintenance of the great traditions of reverence to parents and funeral ceremonies, were alike intense emotional proclivities. He loved the ancient conventions as Confucius did, and put on the same footing the duty of nourishing parents and of mourning for them after their death. To suggest any relaxation on either side was in his eyes to set up 'the beginning of the end.' On these familial relations he seems to have felt and brooded much more than he did on the moral relations and duties of men to each other outside the family. It may be that in his opinion Confucius, whom he extolled as the greatest of mortals, had said all that needed to be said on such duties. In any case, his own master teaching is the certainty of response from the people to kindness on the part of the ruler; to which doctrine he seems to add a confident belief that it needs only benevolence and wisdom in the ruler to make the mass of the people happy. Following Confucius, and so far agreeing with Mih Teih, he insisted that the nature of man is good.[3] But it is clear that he meant this proposition only in a general sense, since he made large reservations.

[1] A. David, p. 167.
[2] Latinized form of Meng-tse or Mang-tse, 'the philosopher Mang.'
[3] *Works of Mencius*, bk. iii, pt. i, ch. i, 2. It is clear that the works of Mencius are not all of his own penning as they stand; but their homogeneity of doctrine is such that there can be no doubt about his teaching in general.

The most striking and most complete of his pronouncements on the social problem in general occurs in the report of his conversation with King Seuen of Ts'e, who seems to have listened to his admonitions with great patience and, indeed, modesty, disparaging himself in the best Chinese manner:—

"Now, if your Majesty will institute a government whose action shall all be benevolent, this will cause all the officers in the Kingdom to wish to stand in your Majesty's court, the farmers all to wish to plough in your Majesty's fields, the merchants, both travelling and stationary, all to wish to store their goods in your Majesty's market-places, travellers and visitors all to wish to travel on your Majesty's roads, and all under heaven who feel aggrieved by their rulers to wish to come and complain to your Majesty. When they are so bent, who will be able to keep them back?"

The King said: "I am stupid, and cannot advance to this. [But] I wish you, my Master, to assist my intentions. Teach me clearly, and, although I am deficient in intelligence and vigour, I should like to try at least [to institute such a government]."

[Mencius] replied: "They are only men of education who, without a certain livelihood, are able to maintain a fixed heart. As to the people, if they have not a certain livelihood, they will be found not to have a fixed heart. And if they have not a fixed heart, there is nothing which they will not do in the way of self-abandonment, of moral deflection, of depravity, of wild licence. When they have thus been involved in crime, to follow them up and punish them is to entrap the people. How can such a thing as entrapping the people be done under the rule of a benevolent man?"

"Therefore an intelligent ruler will regulate the livelihood of the people so as to make sure that, above, they shall have sufficient wherewith to serve their parents, and, below, sufficient wherewith to support their wives and children; that in good years they shall always be abundantly satisfied, and that in bad years they shall not be in danger of perishing. After this he may urge them, and they will proceed to what is good, for in this case the people will follow after that with readiness.

"But now the livelihood of the people is so regulated that above they have not sufficient wherewith to serve their parents, and below they have not sufficient wherewith to support their wives and children; [even] in good years their lives are always embittered, and in bad years they are in danger of perishing. In such circumstances their only object is to escape from death, and they are afraid they will not succeed in doing so: what leisure have they to cultivate propriety and righteousness?

"If your Majesty wishes to carry out [a benevolent govern-

ment], why not turn back to what is the essential step [to its attainment]?

"Let mulberry trees be planted about the homesteads with their five acres, and persons of fifty years will be able to wear silk. In keeping fowls, pigs, dogs, and swine, let not their times of breeding be neglected, and persons of seventy years will be able to eat flesh. Let there not be taken away the time that is proper for the cultivation of the field-allotment of a hundred acres, and the family of eight mouths will not suffer from hunger. Let careful attention be paid to the teaching in the various schools, with repeated inculcation of the filial and fraternal duties, and grey-haired men will not be seen upon the roads carrying burdens on their backs or on their heads. It has never been that [the ruler of a state] where these results were seen, the old wearing silk and eating flesh, and the black-haired people suffering neither from hunger nor cold, did not attain to the Royal dignity."[1]

Here we have the optimistic position shifted from the moral to the economic ground. The people will not be good if they are not living in comfort and security. But they can be enabled to do so by good government. Such an assumption is the most remarkable differentiation between the practical premises of the Chinese teacher and those of the Greeks; and that it should be made by one of a race which from the most ancient times until our own has most clearly exhibited the fatality of the law of population constitutes it one of the most remarkable manifestations of social or economic optimism. In Greece, broadly speaking, all men recognized that more were born than could be fed. It would seem as if the vastness of the area of China, with its large untilled regions, had withheld her sages from even contemplating the socio-biological problem.

We are told nothing of any reply of King Seuen to the optimistic pronouncement of 'the philosopher Mang.' His best brief answer would have been that philosophers' kingdoms (like 'maidens' bairns') are always well managed. Knowing as we do that Mencius could certainly not have achieved what he exhorted King Seuen to do, we need but add that on the face of the case he is evading his ethical problem. All the kings were well fed, but, by his own account, none of them was really good as king,[2] though certain ancient kings had been so. The proposition about human nature, then, was only a tendential maxim for kings, not a scientific thesis.

Mencius claimed for himself that he was skilful in nourishing

[1] Bk. i, pt. ii, ch. vii, 18–24 (pp. 137–39). The idea in the closing words is that a minor king or duke could in this way attain to supreme kingship or emperorship. Mencius was really propounding a new doctrine of ethical imperialism, so to speak.

[2] Bk. i, pt. i, ch. vi, 6.

his emotional nature.[1] Of this he said that "it is exceedingly great and exceedingly strong. Being nourished by rectitude and sustaining no injury, it fills up all between heaven and earth.....It is the mate and assistant of righteousness and reason. Without this, [man's nature] is in a state of starvation." He virtually formulated our modern doctrine of self-determination for peoples,[2] though at the same time he counselled the duke of a small state to see to his defences besides taking care to keep the affections of his people.[3] He is thus memorable as an ethical-minded and far-seeing political reformer; but he leaves us reflecting that, like Mih Teih, with whom he had much more in common than he realized, he lived more in aspiration than in touch with the ethical dilemma of every-day life.

It is not surprising that after Mencius another philosopher, Seun K'ing, wrote an essay on the theme "That the Nature is Evil."[4] The position is that, while man is capable of good, he can be made good only by training: "the good is factitious." Seun insists that it is produced only by "the sages," and is "not to be considered as growing out of the nature of man."[5] What, then, made the sages good? It is obvious that there must have been good somewhere to start with, and that Seun must be non-suited on his thesis, however much practical truth, shared with Aristotle, there may be in his argument. He deals with the thesis of Mencius only on a rigid construction, ignoring his practical reservations; and at times he merely reasons in a circle.

Then came Han Yu, otherwise Han Wan-Kung, 'Han, the Duke of Literature,'[6] who argued that neither of the two contrary theses meets the case, and that, in point of fact, there are three kinds of people: the Superior Grade, who are good all round; the Middle Grade, who are mixed, with excess and defect of emotional qualities and virtues; and the Inferior Grade, who are swayed by the emotion of the moment. "The last grade may be restrained; but the grades have been pronounced by Confucius to be unchangeable."[7] Recognizing that Confucius may have been not far wrong, we must still comment that we in the West have found no perfect grade; and that to the logomachy of Mencius and Seun this is our answer: All the moral good we know is in human nature; and all the moral evil we know is there also. The mixture, truly, varies endlessly; but mixture there always is.

[1] "My vast, flowing, passion-nature," is Legge's rendering (bk. ii, pt. i, ch. ii, 11; p. 165).
[2] Bk. i, pt. ii, ch. x, 3.
[3] *Id.* ch. xiii.
[4] Given in Dr. Legge's *Mencius*, ed. 1875, p. 77 *sq.*
[5] *Id.* p. 76.
[6] Legge, as cited, pp. 11, 77, 88.
[7] *Id.* p. 90.

Chapter IV

BUDDHISM

Ancient China may be said to have looked at practical ethics from all the three main points of view—optimism, pessimism, meliorism, with the usual considerable bias of human nature to optimism. There resulted no such influence on conduct as would tend to justify the optimism. But the Buddhism which came from India, and which passed away in the country of its birth, had no better practical success, and left the theoretic problem still ethically unsolved, coming, indeed, to a practically pessimistic conclusion, in which either annihilation or re-absorption in Infinite Existence is propounded as the one answer to the Riddle of Man.

Buddhism indeed interposes a partial pseudo-solution in the shape of the doctrine of Karma, or the transmigration of characters through many incarnations. Despite a suggestion from an eminent thinker[1] that some light on our ethical problems may yet be derived from this source, the present writer is satisfied to maintain that while logic lasts there can be no such contribution. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls, irrelevantly suggested by Plato-Socrates at the close of The Republic, is a mere interpolation into the ethical problem of a series which logically ends where it began, and does but tend to confuse ethical thought by obscurely offering a pseudo-philosophical ground for the instinct of punishment. Its philosophical bankruptcy is nowhere more clear than in the system of Schopenhauer, whose adoption of it is finally inconsistent with his own philosophical system.

Be our individual natures predominantly good or predominantly bad—that is, scrupulous or unscrupulous—they are in no degree more explained by positing any series of pre-incarnations, tending upward or downward, than by positing the dependence of character on brain and other physical structure resulting from heredity, and on training and knowledge by which it is more or less modifiable. The latter account of things is in accordance with all analogy, and

[1] T. Whittaker, *The Abstract Theory of Ethics*, end.

involves no contradiction.[1] The other is a mere circuitous attempt to fix blame on the will as somehow abstractly free to *be what* it will. In regard to Buddhism, as in regard to Christianity, the answer lies in the challenge: What do you propose to *do* about it?

Will your method either of training or of punishment be affected by assuming that a bad disposition is so because (as you conceive) it wanted to be so? In a word, are you bent upon revenge on a nature that you feel to deserve to be tortured? If so, the Christian hell seems the most satisfying procedure. If not, the question of the degree of incompatibility between one man's bias and other men's rights is to be treated as one of the mode and measure of social protection that the case calls for. Ethical problems, properly so called, are problems of human relations. A thesis either of the creation of bad wills *by* a will, or of the vengeance exigible from them by a deity which either did or did not create them, is a thesis of theology; and if theological hypotheses, independent of the human problem, are once admitted into the structure of ethics its rational discussion is at an end.

The Buddhist doctrine of Karma, indeed, though probably derived from primitive superstition, is remarkable as being adopted and adapted with an ethical purpose. At the first step it is in conflict with the Buddhist denial of the existence of 'souls,' the very conception upon which the theory of re-incarnation primarily proceeds. That is rejected by the framers of the Buddhist system as a superstition; but they employ the belief in re-incarnation by way of a working solution of the problem of evil.[3] In their doctrine, there survives at death something which is the outcome or result of a man's deeds, his *Karma*, which is literally his 'doing.' It is not a personality conscious of itself, it is just an abstract something;[2] and the Buddhist system frankly avows that this is an unintelligible mystery—one of four imposed upon the believer. The *Karma* has somehow a will-to-live, a desire of continuance; and accordingly it somehow finds a new body suited to it. When, then, injustice or any other evil happens to any man, he is to reflect that every moral evil is a moral retribution (the Hebrew dogma denied in JOB), and that his suffering must be a result of his *Karma* in a previous

[1] The individual, says Mr. Whittaker, "is not a *mere complex* of hereditary and socially-impressed tendencies, though these *contribute* to make *it* empirically what *it* is." I confess myself unable to divine what a 'mere complex' *would* be. By implication it cannot be at all. What, then, can follow in reasoning from the proposition that the impossible is not? And what, again, *for us*, is the individual as apart from the 'contributions' specified? Are we to legislate for *noumena*?

[2] Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, ed. 1882, pp. 96–103.

[3] Cp. Beal, *Buddhism in China*, 1884, p. 188.

incarnation, though he retains no knowledge of it.[1] The dogma is thus twofold, and both parts are blank affirmations, with no pretence of rational proof. The *Karma* is a result of the past actions of conscious persons, embodied in a person who is not conscious of that past; and the sufferings he is alleged to undergo for the past deeds of the *Karma* arise from the action of others, in regard to which there is no pretence of showing any causal connection whatever. The victim is simply told to believe that so it is; and the sole ethical remedy prescribed is that he is not merely to do nothing wrong but is to become absorbed in the desire to get rid of all other desires. If only he will do that, he will have 'no more births.'[2] Nirvana, in which there is neither sorrow nor desire, will be his portion.

It is needless for the purpose of ethics to inquire whether or not the Buddhist Nirvana means annihilation of all personal consciousness.[3] What is certain is that it offers no promise or conception of general betterment in the life of experience, being a gospel for the individual alone. The Buddhist system, in short, is the Indian working-out of the idea of self-poised and self-sufficing acceptance of fate which in Greece and Rome was set forth in one way by Stoicism and in another by Epicureanism. Like those doctrines, and like the equivalent though less supine submission underlying the Chinese ethic, it is the outcome and expression of a social state in which outward self-determination, in the sense of political life, is at an end, and inward self-determination is alone possible. And while this is technically to be termed pessimism, inasmuch as it regards all active life as evil and all active joy as delusion, it is to be noted that it has sufficed for resigned Eastern populations as a philosophy of life as long as the teaching of Confucius. "It has been the most stable doctrine of Buddhism; the one which, in all the different systems developed out of the original teaching of the Pitakas, has been the most universally accepted, *and has had the greatest practical effect on the lives of its believers.*"[4]

The practical effect, it would seem, must have been by way of resignation. Whether this has meant that the world has been for

[1] Professor Rhys Davids suggests (p. 100) that the idea of transmigration originated in the phenomenon of spurious memory, the common sudden sensation that what we are at the moment experiencing had all happened before. But, seeing that the belief in the re-incarnation of 'spirits' in general is held by many Australian aborigines to be the normal course of life-production, it appears more likely that the Indian belief arose in that simple fashion.

[2] *Id.* p. 121.

[3] "Nirvana implies the ideal of intellectual energy, *and* of the cessation of individual existence."..... It is "a blissful mental state, a moral condition, a modification of personal character" (Davids, p. 112). It is, in short, indefinable.

[4] Davids, p. 102.

Buddhists any worse than it would otherwise have been is very doubtful: the resignation itself is a kind of peace for which Western religion has professed much esteem, and which has its analogy to the *ataraxia* of the Epicureans. What has been the effect upon the totality of conduct is a very interesting question, which is as hard to answer as the same question is in regard to the effects of Christianity. Under neither system is there any unity of doctrine with life; the creed prescribes selflessness and posits happiness as a state beyond; the life is one of human happiness and human sorrow and sin. In the poetic teaching of Buddhism the 'happy fireside clime' of Burns is declared to be 'the greatest blessing' equally with the realization of Nirvana.[1] And the Buddhist layman does not now hope to attain Nirvana, though a few are said to have done so in the past: he hopes only to enter upon the 'perfect paths' in this life, which will ensure his reaching Nirvana in some future existence.[2]

Speaking practically, however, we may say that Buddhist ethic so-called is not one of reformation of this world. Such a conception has reached the East, in the latter days, only from the West, where ideals of happiness present themselves to men in the guise of plans of action. Should the ideal of social reconstruction take root and grow in the East as the result of the experience of Europe, there will necessarily ensue a recasting of such systems as Buddhism on the ethical side. For the consciously progressive civilizations, in the meantime, it has no message.

If the doctrine of *Karma* were once logically grasped and believed, it would make an end of reasoned ethic altogether. For if all the evils we suffer are the result of evil deeds in previous incarnations by something we know not, equally our happinesses must mean that our *Karma* in such incarnations did good deeds. Such happinesses, however, are seen falling to the lot of men who do evil in their present lives, as evils are seen to fall upon the good. Our *conduct*, too, must result from the *Karma* of the past. Then there is never any connection between conduct and fate in the life we know; and yet Buddhism inconsistently teaches that good conduct and the renunciation of desire will bring peace, *Karma* to the contrary notwithstanding. The contradiction is absolute.

Buddhism here exemplifies the logical suicide of that predominant Indian philosophy which concludes in the formula that 'All is illusion.' Such a formula negates itself. If all is illusion, it is an illusion to think that all is illusion, and the idea of escaping from

[1] See passages from the *Mangala Sutta* in Davids, pp. 126–27. [2] *Id.* p. 125.

illusion by renouncing all desire for an end or object is only one more illusion. Buddhism adopts the doctrine of the illusoriness of all things in the very act of prescribing courses of action as means to the attainment of a kind of blessed wishlessness, and takes for granted that there is no illusion in seeking for it, or in the belief in its attainability, or in its desirability. And on the top of all this comes the doctrine of Karma, which in turn must be illusion. And the Karma doctrine, as we have seen, stultifies itself by teaching that the past-made *Karma* affects the action of others, but does not determine the conduct of the person in whom it is incarnated. If there is to be a direct influence on conduct at all, the ground of prescription must shift from *Karma* to the calculation of conduct and its results *in* the life we know. When, however, the ideal end is fixed in the renunciation of all desire, the contradiction re-emerges, since the *desire* for absolute peace is really assumed as a motive power strong enough to overpower all other desires. We end with the recognition that the East has evolved an ethic in which the fulfilment of one kind of desire, the accompaniment of a given physiological state, is dogmatically propounded as the highest good. The attitude of the agent towards other men's desires, or towards any responsibilities which may be held to attach to him, is left to be settled, if at all, by other considerations. And the most sympathetic account that has been given of the Buddhist peoples[1] avows that, like other peoples, they disobey their ideals. Their ethic, then, has to be made over again even for themselves.

If, finally, it should be asked whether the doctrine of Karma has not an ethical value as tending to eradicate the desire for revenge, by creating a kind of general recognition of evil as immanent in life, and not to be laid at the door of the evil-doer, the answer is threefold. In the first place, the doctrine formally posits the notion of evil personalities, and any Buddhist achievement of non-retaliation is and can be sought for only in direct commandment or in the mere inculcation of the love of peace. Secondly, the elimination of the sheer instinct of revenge is much better promoted by the scientific recognition of evil in character and in will as a matter of structure and training. Thirdly, it is as expedient for Buddhists as for other people to consider whether the attempt to do good by asserting what is not believed to be true must not necessarily tend to do evil. If fraud is to be justified because of a good end in view, it would seem unwarrantable to veto any other mode of non-reciprocity.

[1] *The Soul of a People*, by H. Fielding Hall.

PART IV

MODERN ETHICAL SYSTEMS

Chapter I

OFFICIAL CHRISTIAN ETHICS

All modern ethical systems in Europe arise in a relation either of adaptation or of opposition to the ethics of Christianity. It is that that figures in nominal control of opinion when the modern world, gaining some independent power of thought from contact with recovered antiquity after the long interlude of barbarism and ecclesiasticism, began to grapple anew with the problems debated by the ancients.

The central ethical (as also the primary historical) principle of Christianity is itself one of barbaric and pre-philosophic theology—the doctrine, namely, of sacrificial salvation. This starting-point it is latterly the practice of conformist writers on ethics to ignore. If, say, a Japanese student were to derive his notion of Christian ethics solely from the account given by such writers, he could not really know what the Christian religion is. A century ago the creed was still fairly definite. To-day, while many sects and organizations continue to profess the traditionary faith, the more instructed writers who represent even nominally orthodox religion are occupied in finding formulas and phraseologies which tacitly surrender the historic creed.

> As was before noted, recent Christian apologetics runs largely to the claim that 'Christian experience is self-vindicating,' as against the now undenied criticism that the main historic doctrines of Christianity are not true. This is, in effect, not merely a constructive vindication of untruth as an educative method, but a justification of any personal claim to make individual satisfaction outweigh moral criticism that rests upon the canon of reciprocity. Either creeds and congregations, like persons, admit the canons of consistency and reciprocity or they do not. If they do not, it is unnecessary to meet their claims further than to point out that the Thug sect may

conceivably have justified itself by 'experience,' and that the human beings who frankly put the memory of 'a good time' higher than any conventional code ought not henceforth to incur reprobation at the hands of the school who reduce 'experience' to the sense of 'our emotional satisfactions, exclusively considered.'

It would appear, however, that the modern dialectical reconstruction is still far from being co-ordinated. One expert exponent of Christian ethics avows that: "If we simply seek to isolate the philosophic and ethical postulates of Jesus and his early disciples, and thus identify Christianity with these, we might well ask with Ziegler: 'Are we still Christian?'"[1] That is to say, in effect, Christianity does not now stand to the 'postulates' of the New Testament, for the writer accepts the gospels and the epistles as substantially authentic. But in other sections the same writer attempts a deduction of the personal ethics of the gospel Jesus from the teachings ascribed to him; and for the rest he appears to maintain that the 'significance of Jesus and Christianity' consists in the 'impression' made by the personality of Jesus as set forth in the narratives. The ethical conception thus associated with the personality of the Founder is one of a theism which affirms the direct control of all life by a deity conceived as actively benevolent and also as omnipotent, but as requiring for his moral satisfaction active acquiescence in his 'will.'

Inasmuch as the theism in question is now avowed to have been bound up with, or rather to have been embodied in, an 'eschatological' faith—a belief, that is, in the near end of the existing world by a divine cataclysm—it would not appear to be now urged upon us as a doctrine adequate to human needs. If it should be, it may suffice to point out that, even if the eschatology be mentally separated from the rest of the doctrine, it remains neither a theoretical nor a practical contribution of any importance. The postulate of a perfectly good God, who loves all his creatures and (as a condition of his approval) demands love and resigned obedience in return, merely ignores all the problems of thought and of action which have set men upon ethical debate. For the purposes of ethics it has no cogitable significance.

As regards Christianity, then, the only course for a critical inquirer into the history, as tending to elucidate the problem, of ethics is to deal with the code and practice of official Christianity as such. The code was summarized for the modern world alike by Catholics and Protestants with only minor differences turning upon ecclesiastical usage. Both affirm a creed of sacrificial redemption.

[1] Prof. T. C. Hall, D.D., *History of Ethics within Organized Christianity*, 1910, p. 5, citing Th. Ziegler, *Geschichte der christlichen Ethik*, ed. 1892, p. 593.

That all mankind had 'fallen' with Adam, thereby incurring 'God's wrath'; that none could be 'saved' in virtue of his own merits; that God's wrath appropriately expresses itself in a penal system of eternal physical torture; and that God sent his Son to earth to die as a sacrifice to his Father, and thus 'take away the sin of the world,' but only for such as 'believed on him'—such was the scheme of ethics imposed by the Christian Sacred Books on the decadent and collapsing civilization of the ancient Mediterranean world, and passed on to the re-barbarized life which in the West was set up on its ruins.

The Alleged Social Transformation.—It is still common to find it assumed that somehow this creed, in virtue of its precepts, its 'sanctions,' its adoption of certain Judaic vetoes on pagan vices, and its establishment of marriage on a 'sacramental' footing, at once introduced a better way of life, which has gone on bettering ever since. The assumption will bear no investigation. To begin with, there is no point in Western history after the age of the Antonines at which the Roman Empire, while it subsisted, can plausibly be said to have been on the whole better governed, peace and order to have been better secured, civic life less vicious, and general happiness more common than in antiquity. Certain forms of practical savagery conserved by the pagan Empire did indeed disappear—for instance, the gladiatorial games; but this seems to have been a strictly economic, as distinguished from an ethical, result;[1] and the same must be said of the gradual disappearance of slavery in Christendom. For the Sacred Books not only never impugn that institution, they accept it just as did the Greek and Roman moralists; though the Essene sect, which in Jewry preceded the Jesuist, had rejected it; the Jewish Platonist, Philo of Alexandria,[2] had condemned it as the worst of evils; and the pagan Seneca had called for a treatment of domestic slaves as friends, as Cicero before him had inclined to the view that they ought all to be put on the footing of wage-earners.

In so far as Christianity stood for either an abolition (Mk. x, 11–12) or a restriction (Mt. xix, 4–9) of divorce, as against the latitude allowed by Judaism, it is held to have improved conduct; but it is similarly claimed for Judaism that *it* elevated family life with great latitude of divorce. On the other hand, the *anti*-familial doctrines embedded in the gospels, perhaps by communistic sectaries, cannot have had any good effect on family life. "Every one," it runs,

[1] See *A Short History of Christianity*, 2nd ed. p. 156.
[2] If he be accepted as the author of the treatise, *On the Contemplative Life*.

"that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother [or wife: *many ancient MSS.*], or children, or lands, for my name's sake, *shall receive a hundredfold*, and shall inherit eternal life."[1] In another version[2] the promise becomes: "shall receive a hundredfold *now in this time*, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, *with persecutions*"—a mosaic of doctrine which tells of repeated manipulation. In a third version[3] the promise becomes simply that there is no one who leaves house and kin for the Kingdom of God's sake "who shall not receive manifold more in this time." In yet another passage[4] the doctrine becomes strangely fanatical: "If any man cometh unto me and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

It is plain that such complexities of doctrine, and the disparagement of married life which is implicit in the gospels,[5] must have tended, if at all influential, to disintegrate life and conduct, whatever may have been the counter-effect of positive precepts which are never brought into relation with these. The probability is, perhaps, that neither anti-familial nor normal precepts had much influence: competent Christian scholarship admits that it is very doubtful whether any measurable difference ever arose in any society through the operation of religious motives. "In religion, as in society, it is the average that rules."[6] "No truth is more certain than this, that the real motives of religious action do not work on men in masses."[7] A less candid scholarship undertakes to show that when Christianity entered the western Roman world it found a mass of corruption which it more or less rapidly transmuted.[8] In such an exposition even the admission that the multitude of pagan *collegia* or clubs "formed a natural prototype for the Christian Churches and their charitable societies" is accompanied by the assertion that, "so far as can be ascertained, they did not use their funds for *the poor*," and that "they did not feel or express the 'enthusiasm of humanity,' *and* therefore died out *or were converted into Christian societies*."[9]

Now, the societies in question were mainly made up of poor artisans who clubbed together to provide the expenses of their funerals in the fashion of modern friendly societies, and on that basis established social centres for themselves. The early churches made provision primarily for their own poor after the manner of the Jewish synagogues, and, further, made such

[1] Mt. xix, 29. [2] Mk. x, 30. [3] Lk. xviii, 30. [4] Lk. xiv, 26.
[5] Mt. xix, 12; cp. Rev. xiv, 4. [6] Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 341.
[7] Bishop Stubbs, *Const. Hist.* 3rd ed. iii, 638.
[8] *E.g.* the *Gesta Christi* of C. Loring Brace, 3rd ed. 1889; C. Schmidt, *The Social Results of Early Christianity*, Eng. trans. 1885. [9] Brace, as cited, p. 100.

alms a means of attracting converts, the cost being defrayed mainly by the richer donors. But in pagan Rome, where doles of food by the State had subsisted for centuries, there was much private charity. "Pliny has a conception of the uses and responsibilities of wealth which, in spite of the teaching of Galilee, is not yet very common.....But.....there were many men and women in obscure municipalities all over the world who were as generous and public-spirited as Pliny.....In remote country towns there were pious founders who, like Pliny, and Trajan, and the Antonines, provided for the nurture of the children of the poor. Bequests were left to cheapen the necessaries of life. Nor were the aged and the sick forgotten."[1]

Add that Marcus Aurelius made provision for municipal physicians throughout the empire, and that great public funds were collected in aid of sufferers from famines and great disasters such as the destruction of Pompeii, and it is seen that the picture of Christian charity emerging in an unfeeling world is a travesty of the facts. Even the polemist is fain to cite the memorable epitaph of a pagan Roman woman: *Omnium hominum parens, omnibus subveniens, tristem fecit neminen*—'A parent to all men, helping all, she made none sad.'[2] To which we may add the poignantly pathetic inscription on the tomb of Julia Prisca: *Nihil unquam peccavit nisi quod mortua est*—'She never did any wrong, except to die.'[3]

A little reflection will show any one who is not committed to a partisan opinion, that the conception of a religion as transforming a people in respect of the production of a good minority (for to that the thesis is soon reduced) is self-stultifying. Either the good converts are made good by their religion or they are not. If yes, there is no conceivable explanation of the failure of the religion to make the majority good also. There is no standing ground save in the conclusion that the good were so by prior disposition or prior training: the avowals of the failure of Christian laws to sway a hardened people, and the pretence that after political establishment the Christians were 'corrupted' by contact with the pagans whom they had formerly shunned,[4] are the tacit surrender of the claim that religion can work social miracles. The argument, in fact, is self-destructive in every direction. If the pagan world was one of mere rottenness, the new creed figures as the ideal of a decomposing society—a product, in fact, of social decomposition. The historic truth is simply that the Christian organization was a successful

1 Prof. Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, 1905, pp. 193–95.
2 Given by Rossi, *La Roma sotteranea Christiana*.
3 Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, Eng. tr. 1895, p. 300.
4 So Schmidt, as cited, p. 448 *sq*.

variant, in respect of its economic, pietistic, and didactic elements, from pre-existing practice and doctrine. It did not and could not mean a social transformation. The picture drawn by Salvian of life in Christian Gaul in the fifth century, and those drawn by the Byzantine historians and Fathers of the life of Constantinople under Justinian in the sixth, tell of no social betterment, moral or other. The hideous murder of Hypatia by the Cyrillian monks of Alexandria (415) is a new birth of bestial savagery.

As regards the 'intellectual virtues,' again, it is claimed that the Christian ideal of humility was a vital innovation; but this we have seen to be a historical delusion; and unless we are to pronounce the institution of celibate religious Orders a total betterment of human life, the inculcation and practice of self-repression in those Orders can hardly count as a valuable ethical development. Unquestionably there was no visible general gain to conduct from the inculcation of the law of love. The books of the New Testament themselves exhibit sectarian hate and dogmatic intolerance as in active existence from the first generation; and the sects were admittedly at daggers drawn[1] when Constantine decided to make Christianity the religion of the State as the organization best suited to the purposes of autocratic government. And whereas the persecutions of the early Church by the Emperors have always been greatly stressed in the pictures of its growth, it seems quite certain that much more Christian blood was shed by Christian hands, even in sectarian warfare before the fall of the empire, than had been spilt by pagans.

The Theological Factor.—On the theoretic side of morals, with which we are here finally concerned, there was clearly no advance, even if we set aside the profound retrogression involved in the reign of the doctrine of remission of sins by blood sacrifice, which must always have tended to countervail any precepts of good conduct. The principle laid down in the Epistle to the Romans (ix, 21), "Hath not the potter a right over the clay?", is a definite bar to any sincere ethic, as it in effect affirms that the deity makes men good or bad at his pleasure. And when, at the stage of the collapse of the Western Empire, the doctrine of foreordination pressed itself newly upon the thought of such Christian teachers as could still think at all comprehensively in virtue of early pagan philosophical training, the result, at the hands of Augustine, was an affirmation of determinism in the one form in which it is irreconcilable alike with moral instinct and moral reason.

[1] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, bk. ii, § 61.

Those for whom the story of Adam and Eve is become a fairy tale are apt, when they would conceive how it once affected men's way of thinking, to see only its forlorn absurdity, missing its moral repulsiveness. It presents the conception of a suddenly created automaton, devoid of moral and all other habitudes, and supplied with a similar mate, ordered not to eat apples from a particular tree, yet consenting on her persuasion to try one. They are thus 'damned' for not realizing the importance of obedience when they could have no moral conception of that or anything else, having had only a bald menace, which also they could not understand. To make the moral still worse, the temptation is itself supernatural. In the earliest form of the story, the serpent was probably the representative of a distinct Evil Deity; in the Judæo-Christian form he is the One God's creature, working the One God's will. Upon the eating of the apple, however, the primal pair are classed once for all as sinners, and all their posterity with them. To realize that the ethical world, so to say, of systematic Christian theology was built upon this foundation is to know that there could be no outcome worthy of good moral faculties.

The strict summing up of the situation created for the decadent pagan world by the formulated Christian religion might be, in brief, that as men's hearts were deluded by the creed of salvation, their heads were deluded by the fable of the Fall. Both expel the first elements of rational justice. If there be any truth whatever in the surmise that the betterment of the world can come about only by way of a habit of more reasonable thinking among men and women, we might almost say without further inquiry that it could not go forward under a creed which posited such a God as the God of Adam and Eve and the God of Paul, of Paradise, and of Calvary. If myth is to lead men to right conduct it must be better myth than this. But it was this God of the pre-historic dream, who creates wrong-doers in order to be able to punish them, and then makes a blood-sacrifice of his son to pacify his sense of justice—it was this God to whom Augustine addressed his raptures in the CONFESSIONS. Here once more we have the Good and the Evil in coalescence.

The formulated doctrine of predestination was thus a result at once of the basal doctrine of blood-redemption, the datum of the Avenging God, and the absorption of churchmen in what they regarded as a perpetual communion with that God. All right-doing and wrong-doing were resolved into obeying or disobeying, pleasing or offending, the deity. Men's innumerable and immeasurable sins against each other were conceived as sins against God, and held

to be potentially forgiven when the Son of God 'submitted' to crucifixion in place of the hereditarily guilty human race. Good deeds equally were services rendered to God. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these ye have done it unto me"; but even at that, deeds could not win salvation, which was accorded only to faith. Here all morality, as reasoning men had known it in the past, is swallowed up in theology. The very precept to love one another is turned into one of loving God.

Under such a theory, men have no rights as against each other. Augustine and other Fathers might, and did, stand up on occasion for the rights of labour and the duty of working, which were so habitually ignored in the aristocratic pagan ethic, though they are recognized in Jewish Rabbinical practice. But these positions were only occasional, and were taken up only on special promptings of church interest or sympathy. The ideal of absorption in God, all the while, led to the magnifying of the celibate monastic life; even as the principle of asceticism, always active in decaying or depressed communities, led to the magnification of celibacy for men and women as against marriage. Thus the Christian Church, here following Egyptian and other Eastern leads, laid upon a decaying society the burden of a mainly idle class which had been unknown to the Greeks, and was represented for the Romans only by the few Vestal Virgins. The family life which Christianity is asserted to have preserved was in effect treated as relatively unworthy.[1]

But the vital harm to mental life lay in the theoretic reduction of human relations to an imaginary relation with deity. Inasmuch as the interpretation of the divine 'will' lay with the Church, as for the time being constituted, all men's opinions were at its mercy; and Augustine, the most influential Father of his age, expressly laid down the principle of the Church's supremacy over the State.[2] Averse from persecution while the memory of the persecution of Christians by pagans was fresh, he came to approve of it when the heretical Donatists began to trouble the Church; and between his precept, his practice, and his ethical theory there was laid the foundation for all the systematic persecutions carried on by the Church in later ages. When every opinion or action disapproved of by the Church was counted a sin against God, human liberty was more completely suppressed than it had ever been in the pagan

[1] For details see Luthardt's (Lutheran) *History of Christian Ethics*, Eng. trans. vol. i, 1889, pp. 209, 217, 229, 278; and cp. Principal Donaldson, *Woman: Her Position and Influence in Ancient Greece and Rome, and among the Early Christians*, 1893, bk. iii; bk. iv; and J. McCabe, *Influence of the Church on Marriage and Divorce* 1916, ch. iv.

[2] Luthardt, p. 228.

empire. That, according to Christian jurists,[1] was 'irreligious' in its attitude to law. The religious attitude, as formed in ancient Egypt and developed under the Christian Church, made an end of the moral guidance of reciprocity and utility, putting in their place a theology which Church Councils shaped at will, and which slew men in one age for teaching what in an earlier age men had been excommunicated for denying.

All this meant a new perversion of the faculty of judgment. Adherents to whom the code of faith had primarily recommended itself as really good were in effect pronouncing the alleged divine commandment good because it realized their own prior code. Those who joined under a vague conviction of the sanctity of the group, or the divinity of the Founder, taking the code as obligatory because divinely given, were so far moral personalities only in the most limited sense. When the leaders of such a group formulated all manner of new laws and beliefs as God-given, they were either collectively mere 'hallucinates' or more or less consciously practising fraud, declaring their personal preferences in doctrine and practice to be the will of Omnipotence. In short, all that was moral in official Christianity was the element of sound primordial or common-sense ethic which was common to civilized men in general. The other original element of savage theology was in essence immoral; and the added official code of sacred taboos on action and opinion was paralysing to moral judgment even where it might prescribe right action—which was far from being always the case. Often the prescription was iniquitous. Of course, all action which follows a seriously accepted code is to be reckoned so far forth moral, and morals bad at one point do not mean wholly evil conduct.

Dogma and Practice.—The practical as well as the theoretic blow at rational ethics is already struck in the sacred books. In the gospels the Apostle Peter is represented as basely denying his lord in the supreme crisis. Immediately afterwards, in the Acts of the Apostles, he is presented as not only an authoritative figure but as the instrument of the supernatural slaying of Ananias and Sapphira, both of whom he dooms to death because the former had held back part of the proceeds of a piece of land which he had professed to donate voluntarily to the Church. Peter's miserable treason is already condoned, and he, by implication, unhumbled, in virtue of the divine sacrifice; Ananias, who *ex hypothesi* should benefit likewise by the sacrifice, is singled out for supernatural

[1] So Cherry, *Lectures on Criminal Law in Ancient Communities*, 1890, p. 75 *sq.*

slaughter because to defraud the Church is to 'sin against the Holy Ghost.' A new crime is constituted by a figment.

Both stories are myths; but if men are swayed for good or evil by their religious lore what must have been the effect of such teaching on early Christian ethics? It is to be remarked that the moral savagery here is associated with an ideal of a kind of ecclesiastical communism; a reminder that in ancient as in modern times 'ideals' which have a quasi-ethical may also have an extremely evil side. The teaching, "Sell whatever thou hast and give to the poor,"[1] is indeed as anti-selfish as it is Utopian; but the tale of Ananias reminds us that the Fathers who founded on the gospel precept a polemic against great possessions[2] are not to be assumed to have had an exceptional regard for reciprocity in other regards. Tertullian, who averred that in his Church they had all things in common saving their wives,[3] has as little of the spirit of goodwill to men in general as any writer in Christian history. The whole of the early Christian polemic against riches, in fact, is a phase of asceticism rather than of reasoned ethic; and we have the record of Basil that ascetics whose outward life he had revered turned out to be detestable comrades.[4] Concerning almsgiving, again, it should be remembered that that 'virtue' is more habitually practised in the East in general than in Christendom, without being held to prove a general moral superiority.

Almsgiving is in fact inculcated on definitely non-moral grounds by three eminent Fathers, Cyprian (200–258), Chrysostom (347–407), and Ambrose (340–397). The last is ranked high because he insisted upon a genuine acceptance of the gospel command to resist not evil (physically), and yet showed unsubduable fortitude against Theodosius. But he follows Cyprian in teaching that as baptism takes away all past sin, so almsgiving procures forgiveness for new sins every time it is repeated.[5] Chrysostom writes: "Throw the poor man a coin, and thou hast reconciled the judge."[6] The doctrine as to baptism, it should be remembered, had become the general Christian belief before Constantine; so that the most devout believers, such as the parents of Basil and Ambrose, postponed the baptism of their children to the adult period. Such a belief carried in it the possibility of all the moral frauds of Catholicism; and the doctrine that almsgiving procures forgiveness of sins, accredited by

[1] Mk. x, 21.
[2] Basil, *Homily on Riches;* Salvian, *Adv. Avaritiam;* Jerome, *Ad. Hedibiam;* Ambrose, *Sermon on Naboth.*
[3] *Apolog.* c. 39.
[4] R. T. Smith, *St. Basil the Great*, 1879, p. 22.
[5] Luthardt, p. 211, and refs.
[6] *Id.* p. 173.

such names, served as a foundation for all the financial exploitation of ecclesiastical forgiveness by the later Church. It is in fact the equivalent of the doctrine of indulgences. Yet Cyprian and Ambrose and Chrysostom were all ascetics.

Even where asceticism proceeded upon a sincere neurotic recoil from the heedlessness of the ordinary sensual life, and developed into a sincere Oriental pessimism as to the value of mundane life in general, it exhibited its moral poverty by resort to arguments which were not pleas for asceticism at all. Not only is the virgin told that she is the spouse of Christ (with rapturous comments), and her mother that she is "the mother-in-law of God,"[1] but virginity is represented as an escape from the cares of marriage, the burden of pregnancy, and the pangs of childbirth. On a balance, the celibate ideal is seen to work out in a rather large class of nominal virgins who seek the prestige without the practice; in a multitude of monks whose arrogance and idleness are avowed by the Fathers themselves; in virgins who need much exhortation to humility, after being told that, as brides of Christ, they are much superior to all married women; and in records such as Basil's of an outbreak of license after "a long period of the extremest asceticism."[2] Society as a whole evidently gained less than nothing from a mystical ethic according to which all normal married people were relatively impure. How, indeed, should a good morality, which is a code for men and women living in society, come from men wholly outside of society and contemners of it?

Broadly considered, the morality of the Fathers conveys a constant impression of hopeless social malady and individual hysteria,[3] as of men at odds with life, conscious of appetites only as means to sin, averse from all human joys as being godless, and making the decrees of a jealous God alike their motive and their criterion. Basil forbade laughter. Hardly even in Buddhism is the sense of the immanence of evil and decadence in all things more oppressive than in the early Christian literature. Both systems are in fact products of ages of decline in energy and hope; with the difference that the pantheistic system is tolerant, quietist, humane, while the theistic, for most of its zealots, is never delivered from the spirit of retribution, seeing in the normal man a rebel against God, and in all religions save the revealed a high treason against

[1] So Jerome, Ep. xvii, *ad Eustochium*, § 20. The whole epistle is a memorable picture of Christian society in Jerome's day.

[2] R. T. Smith's *St. Basil*, p. 231. Basil in his Homily on Psalm i describes a Bacchanalian orgie of *Christian* women in the churches of the martyrs. *Id.* p. 181.

[3] Hysteria of the most literal kind in Jerome; literary hysteria in Augustine.

Jehovah. In the last age of cultivated paganism the wrathlessness of the Gods[1] had become a commonplace through the teaching of Cicero and Seneca as of their Greek masters. For the Christians such a notion was itself evil, the negation of Judæo-Christian religion. For the Semitic Tertullian idolatry is the crime of crimes,[2] of which insane way of thinking the Nemesis is the ultimate triumph of idolatry in his own Church. The reasoning temper which might conceivably have eliminated idolatry was itself subdued by the spirit of dogma; and when the religious psychosis fastened on sacred images they became dogma in turn.

A code of life thus severed from the rational tests alike of utility and reciprocity could finally avail neither for asceticism nor for justice. Asceticism indeed continued to be the acclaimed type of Christian virtue: not the actively good citizen but the anchorite in his cell is at once the official and the popular model of the good man. Tertullian's sectarian ideal was as impossible for the life of a nation as had been those of either the Stoics or the Epicureans. When, therefore, the decadent life of the old world has been overlaid by the new energy of victorious northern barbarism, slowly growing civilized in a new evolution by assimilation of the arts and the knowledge of the pagan past, the official code of the Church could but accommodate itself to the new spirit of life. Barbarism has its neurotics like 'civilization,' and these duly reinforced the reign of dogma; but the main movement was towards humanism, on the old plane. The early Christian veto on the vocation of the soldier was perforce recalled. The other vetoes against usury and drama held only so long and so far as the new civilization remained relatively primitive enough to exclude or humble the old energies of gain-getting commerce and the instincts of art: in Tudor England they can be seen handed on from the medieval Church to the 'museless' Protestantism which reverted to the sombre mood of the early Christians. Even the renascent drama, itself still frowned-on as a secular and pagan thing by the Church, goes on echoing the veto on usury with an instinctive effort at justifying by a naturalistic logic what had been formulated as a quasi-ethical censure of riches and luxury. To lend at interest is to 'take a breed of barren metal.'[3] But the growth of commerce overrode all that, as drama itself overrode the old Christian hatred of the play.

Concerning property in general, the Church, which became itself a State and the political co-efficient of States, could not gain-

[1] Cicero, *De Officiis*, bk. ii, c. 3; iii, 28, 29.
[2] *De Idololatria*, c. i.
[3] *Merchant of Venice*, I, iii, 135.

say the rule of possession by which itself lived; and only the inculcation of the duty of gifts and bequests to the Church or its Orders remained to recall the agrarian communism of the Fathers. Slavery subsisted till sheer economic causation eliminated it, the Church remaining the chief slave-holder to the last, though possibly the most humane. The new possibility of peace which seemed to emerge with the regimen of the Holy Roman Empire and the universal spiritual reign of the Papacy disappeared as soon as it had shone; and the Church became but an intriguing factor in the strifes of the States, the dynasties, the factions. Besides indurating hostility as between Italy and the Germanic Empire and between the factions in Italy, it made rigid the enmity between eastern and western Christendom;[1] and yet further created a new and intenser spirit of aggregate antagonism between the Christian and the non-Christian worlds when Islam overspread an area which Christianity had originally held.

Then came the unprecedented evil of the systematic crushing of heresy as mortal sin,[2] to be exterminated by the combined action of Church and State. The crusades against Islam for the recovery of the empty tomb of the alleged divine Founder shook the fabric of civilization throughout Christendom, throwing up a vast turmoil of crime and violence; but the crusades against Provençal heresy early in the thirteenth century seemed almost destined to destroy the remaining foundations of human morality. For rendering forty days' military service against the doomed populations, whose heresy must for the most part have been imaginary, all crusaders were accorded absolution for their sins, past and future. The historic outcome was an anticipation of the German handling of Belgium in 1914, protracted over many years of massacre and rapine; and the doctrine of ecclesiastical indulgence for sin was now definitely part of the religious code of Christendom.[3]

Those who set against this profound perversion of moral thought, and the atrocities of medieval Christian practice in general, an idyllic conception of the 'truce of God' as an outstanding historical feature, are hopelessly misconceiving medieval life; and there can be no scientific comprehension of the topic of religious ethic until the truth is broadly recognized. It is constantly turned to mystification, in the religious retrospect, by each sect for itself. Protes-

[1] A historian of Christian ethics notes "the undying hate that kept the two communions apart." Prof. T. C. Hall, as cited, p. 257.
[2] This teaching is officially promulgated as early as Cyprian (Luthardt, p. 192). But it is implicit and explicit in the New Testament.
[3] Refs. in *Short History of Freethought*, 3rd ed. i, 303.

tantism has for centuries indicted Catholicism; and, now that the Protestant animus is lessening, scholarly Catholicism has drawn up against Protestantism a highly documented indictment,[1] which for multitude and exactitude of detail and severity of charge is not surpassed by anything on the Protestant side. Between the two indictments there is small room for doubt as to the practical failure of religion to moralize life. But what passes for sociological generalization in current literature is virtually oblivious of the records.

Condensing the problem to a survey of the main political evolution, we find that, while the religious influences alternately made for and against forms of civic freedom, and to a small extent even for the spirit of tolerance, they were quite powerless to affect that aggregate appetite for strife which in the ancient world wrought the downfall of all the civilizations in turn, and has perhaps come within measurable distance of doing so for ours. While the schism between Protestants and Catholics gave rise to the most frightfully destructive and demoralizing wars, all visibly throwing civilization back, neither Protestants nor Catholics ever more than momentarily approached to a state of secured peace within their own religious pale. Catholic France and Spain grappled as savagely as Protestant England and Holland; in England religious animosities were the initial causes of the Civil War; and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes preluded a new generation of slaughter. In a word, the political failure of Christianity as a controlling or restraining force was complete. And it is essential to keep this in view here, because that failure leads up to the great practical problem of international ethics for our own day.

Christian Theoretic Ethics.—Meanwhile we have to trace the specific influence of the Christian creed on ethical theory. We have seen it definitely imposing a theological motive and standard, to the exclusion of the human, and making the imagined supernatural relation the end of life and action. On this footing the mental and the social life are alike put under ecclesiastical control, and all utterance which contravenes the ecclesiastical code of 'truth' is penalized. Hence a multitude of new theoretic sins, liable to be savagely punished, while real sins against man are resolved into sins against God, for which the sinner can be absolved upon penitence—with payment. As soon as the Church is politically established there begins formally the Arian schism, and the analysis

[1] See J. Janssen's *History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages*, Eng. tr. 1896–1910, 16 vols.

of the Trinity becomes the supreme Christian concern. To that all ethic is subordinate, and the opposing devotees shun each other as lepers. The bishops of the West, too, take no concern for the life of the East.[1]

Ecclesiastical ethic then begins to take shape at the hands of men committed to the dogmas of the Council of Nicæa (325) and the multiform doctrine of the sacred books, but mostly trained, like Basil and Ambrose, in the classic culture as well as in the ascetic devotion developed in the persecuted Church of the near past. Thus we find the humane Basil, who warmly condemned the sale of slaves, balancing between (*a*) the Greek conception of human nature as naturally attracted to virtue and (*b*) the Semitic myth of the Fall;[2] (*c*) the Greek idea of virtue as attainable through knowledge and conduct and (*d*) the Christian dogma of redemptory grace; (*e*) the sane pagan principle that punishment should not be merely retaliatory, but corrective and exemplary,[3] and (*f*) the insane Christian dogma of the necessary eternity of punishment in hell as the correlative of the eternity of heaven.[4] Hell carries the day, and the ground is fully cleared for the doctrine of a God who created all things out of nothing, foreseeing the Fall when planning Paradise, and building hell accordingly for the creatures he had fore-ordained to it. In due course that gross antinomy is solved like those of the Trinity by a dogma which blankly affirms both terms of the contradiction.

Other early Fathers than Basil at times reverted, and more explicitly than he, to the pre-Christian rational ethic which posited a natural and innate moral judgment. Methodius, Irenæus, and Lactantius, in particular[5] (in the second and third centuries), all combine this pagan datum with their creed of revelation, thus indicating that a pre-Christian ethic was their criterion for that of Christianity. But, as the old culture died out, this appeal to moral reason, as distinct from devout obedience to a sacrosanct prescription, became less and less characteristic of the official doctrine, which found its mainstay in the sacred books. Only the codified imperial law, a heritage from the pagan past, remained to suggest the conception of a valid natural morality.

Formulated Christian ethic thus became a quite arbitrary blend of Semitic ideas with Greek dialectic and Roman legalism. The puzzle of 'free-will' had never seriously troubled the Greeks, despite

[1] R. T. Smith, *St. Basil*, pp. 78–79.
[2] *Id.* pp. 106–8.
[3] Put in the mouth of Protagoras in the Platonic dialogue devoted to satirizing him.
[4] Smith, as cited, pp. 137–39.
[5] Luthardt, pp. 150, 181, 197.

a common leaning to the idea of Fate. They settled the problem in the fashion of Zeno, who, when an offending slave said his offence was fated, replied that it was also fated he should be beaten. Men's responsibility to each other and to the State they simply took for granted; and the majority in the pre-Christian period had never adopted the Eastern doctrine of future punishment put forward by Plato, though many preceded and followed him in affirming the goodness of the Gods. When faced by the dilemma of the existence of evil, some evaded it with Plato by merely denying that the Gods were responsible; others took the cue of Euclides of Megara, and either denied, as we have seen,[1] that evil was a 'real existence,' being merely the privation of good, or insisted that there must always be evil to make good thinkable as such. Basil, ignoring the latter crux, compromised on the bi-frontal position that evil is neither (*a*) uncaused nor (*b*) caused by God; that it certainly exists (Basil had been at times driven near misanthropy by it); yet that it is "not an existence living or animated, but a malady or *diathesis* of the soul contrary to virtue, produced in men's lower nature through their fall from the good."[2] This, in effect, amounted only to saying that there was no Evil One or paramount evil-creating Devil, and was, in fact, heresy, for the Evil One is posited in the gospels; so that the only orthodox interpretation of Basil's words was some approximation to the original Greek thesis. But this, which obviously threw equal doubt on the reality of Good, found little currency in the West. There the Church alternately taught that God fore-ordained all things and that man brought sin into a previously sinless world.

It has been held that the special devotion developed in the Latin Church to the doctrine of fore-ordination came of the Roman absorption in the idea of imperial law, Greek life running to individualism and Roman life to organization.[3] But the Greek-trained Basil had absolutely accepted the dogma that all men had fallen through Adam's eating of the forbidden apple; and the dogma of fore-ordination is Judæo-Christian. Both the affirmation and the denial of predestination arose as doctrinal movements in the West out of particular political and ecclesiastical circumstances, forcing men to reconsider their creeds. Augustine, who throughout his life chronically altered his doctrinal views under promptings of controversy, ended by denying on this head what he had once affirmed.

[1] Above, p. 134.
[2] *Hexaëmeron*, Hom. ii, 4; cp. versions in Hall's *History of Ethics*, as cited, p. 210; R. T. Smith, *St. Basil*, pp. 138–39.
[3] Smith, as cited, pp. 108–9.

The collapse of the Western Empire before the barbarians moved him to posit the universal reign of divine purpose. God, he finally taught, had fore-ordained all men's actions, though at the same time men's God-ordained sins were sins against God, earning his wrath and curse. This, carried against the opposition of the British monk Pelagius,[1] long continued to be the Church's official doctrine.

When, however, the clerical practice of selling masses to relieve souls from purgatory had become a good source of ecclesiastical revenue among the northern peoples, accustomed to the payment of money compensations for breaches of law and order, predestination became an awkward doctrine. Church Councils, probably perceiving the anomaly, long tried to restrict that and similar abuses,[2] but in vain; and in the ninth century the monk Gottschalk led a resistance to the priestly practice, arguing that, as God had fore-ordained all things, no saying of masses could affect the fate of the souls in the other world. Gottschalk had been careful to avoid the old reproach of making God the author of sin, by taking the 'semi-Pelagian' position that God fore-ordains good, but merely fore-knows evil, which left the mass-selling clergy free to argue that God had not absolutely fore-ordained the punishment; but the mere raising of the question was too provoking to be tolerated, and Gottschalk died in excommunication. Thenceforth the Church, Augustine notwithstanding, leant predominantly to the doctrine of 'free-will,' leaving it to Calvin and Luther to embroil the Reformation in turn with the moral instincts of men by re-introducing the Pauline and Augustinian dogma as the evangelical corner-stone.[3] The doctrine of prayer, which does not seem to have disturbed Gottschalk, remained to confuse the creed of both Churches when a scientific conception of the order of nature had established itself for thinking men, both proclaiming God's will immutable, and yet mutable by human appeal. And that confusion rooted in the assumption that prayer is 'communion with God.'

It is arguable that there were better motives as well as financial ones for the Catholic Church's withdrawal from its own traditionary teaching as to fore-ordination; but it is hardly plausible to suggest that the papal authorities were more ethically disposed than Luther and Calvin. Experience was much more clear against the selling of masses and indulgences as an ecclesiastical expedient than against

[1] Probably = Morgan.
[2] See Landon's *Manual of Church Councils*, ed. 1909, i, 210; ii, 10, 11.
[3] Though objections to the doctrine of original sin through Adam had been widely current in England in the age of Wiclif. See Langland's *Vision of Piers Plowman*, ll. 5809 *sq.*

the doctrine that all action is fore-ordained. The practical motive —revenue—was probably the true one; and a similar explanation accounts for the fact that, whereas in the ancient church the non-baptizing of infants was orthodox, it later became heretical. While baptism was indefinitely delayed by way of getting the full good of it as an absolution for all past sin, the Church had practically no hold over the adherent. Once baptized, he could be subjected to financial and other pressure. In the Church as in the outside world, immediate utility shaped practice, whatever might happen to theory. It was largely as a means of extorting money from Jews and Moors that the machinery of the Inquisition was developed in Spain; and it was probably through fear of loss of authority and prestige for the Church that the Papacy set its face against Galileo's effective development of the teaching of Copernicus, after the true astronomic theory, reached in antiquity, had been repeatedly broached with impunity in the Middle Ages.

One outstanding result of the doctrine of divine retribution, as established by the Church's teaching concerning hell and purgatory, was a fixed bias to cruel punishments. This must have been greatly reinforced by Dante's INFERNO, which in a way sums up the working ethic of the Middle Ages. "The Inferno is an account of 'man, as deserving ill by the use of his free will.'.....That is the real subject of the Inferno. All else is accessory and subordinate."[1] And the theological figment of free-will, as a constitutive basis for the conception of sin against God, bore fruit not only in more systematically cruel punishments of all kinds for crime than had ever been inflicted in pagan Rome, but in the punitive treatment of madmen as either devilish or devil-possessed. Nascent science for centuries strove in vain to establish the perception that sorcery was a hallucination: the creed of spirits, and the fixed idea of a free-will independent of malady and madness, kept on foot the practice of witch-burning—a blot on Christian civilization to which there is no parallel in that of Greece and Rome.

The net outcome of official Christian ethics, Catholic and Protestant alike, was the conception of sin as an offence against Omnipotence, requiring supernatural pardon, which required a supernatural sacrifice, which required faith, which required grace, given by Omnipotence in answer to prayer. The logical circle of negation of human judgment was thus complete; and human judgment, accordingly, was nominally excluded from the funda-

[1] *Dante: Six Sermons*, by P. H. Wicksteed, ed. 1892, pp. 49–50.

mental process of deciding what *was* sin, or what *were* sins, to begin with. Of sheer necessity the religious code took over the bulk of the old working code, notably the Hebrew decalogue, which it substituted for the pagan equivalent as regarded monotheism and sabbatarianism. But with Jewish sabbatarianism came in an asceticism which only a section of Jewry[1] had ever accepted; and in neither of these cases was there any pretence of finding a rational basis for the precepts laid down. They were alike divine commands; that was enough. The extolling of celibacy and the denunciation of second marriages, indeed, appealed to à priori superstitions seen in many primitive and other peoples. Self-denial in matters of sex won spontaneous reverence among the pre-Christian Aztecs as it does in the East, the process of thought being that all such renunciation, fasting included, is somehow superhuman as being supernormal. Objections to the re-marriage of *widows*, again, needed no justification to husbands in most periods; and the extension of the censure to the re-marriage of widowers followed from the general veto on appetite. But the ethical process as a whole is one of pure pre-supposition.

Other new arbitrary sins soon took the same ethical rank, in the fashion of ancient taboos. Observance of the Sabbath (a taboo transferred to the Sunday), Lent, vigils, fasts, holy days, and religious services in general, became ethically indistinguishable from practice of the human moral law, save as being more compulsory, more holy, and ultimately more profitable; and infractions of either were correspondingly discriminated. The devout brigand who confidently looks for absolution for his robberies, but is sincerely concerned about his religious duties, has always been a figure in the Christian moral landscape; and the religious moral code has always logically justified him. But even for the average mass of law-abiding believers, simple unbelief, and still more either 'sacrilege' or positive heresy or aggressive criticism of the faith, has always been a more horrifying offence than theft or lying, to say nothing of the sins of the flesh. Morality is thus de-rationalized.

The logical culmination of revelationist ethic was reached by the Schoolmen who in so many words decided that the right in conduct is that which God commands, and is so solely because he commands it; his will being so absolutely the source of rightness that whatever he may will is therefore right. Thus taught Duns Scotus and William of Occam in the fourteenth century, the former certainly

[1] That appealed to in the original form of the Apocalypse—a Jewish production.

in thorough good faith and devotion to his deity and Bible, whatever may have been the object of Occam. The earlier Thomas Aquinas, whose great SUMMA THEOLOGIAE gathers up much of the latent good sense as well as the orthodoxy of the Middle Ages, had harked back to Aristotle for a moral basis in reason, and had even adopted 'the Mean' as a criterion or cue to virtue, thus leaving a place for reason and judgment. Such a doctrine as that of Duns Scotus seems well fitted to turn critical minds against either theism or the Christian form of it; and some have suspected that this was the latent purpose of Occam. But the 'Thomists' in the main held their ground against the 'Scotists,' though Thomas was something of a sceptic and Scotus at the height of belief; and throughout the scholastic period there was no open or general breach between philosophy and faith.

On the political side of life, trouble began very early with the principle of 'sanctuary' for fugitive slaves and criminals,[1] and the consequent erection of the Church into a State within the State, and in effect above the State. In a world in which the secular ruler was often blindly tyrannous, such a counter-force could be only too welcome; and the temporal claims of the Church continued to stand as high as other forms of 'divine right' doctrine until the constitutional principle began to shoulder out all alike. They are, in fact, on all fours ethically; but inasmuch as the claim in the Church's case vests theoretically in an abstraction, and in the monarch's case in a person, the former has the longer hold, the abstraction being believed to be somehow in touch with the supernatural. Thus sincere Catholics in republics appear to be as loyal as those in monarchies to the claims of the Pope, so long as he does not claim to meddle directly with their home politics. When he does (as in the last generation in Ireland) the supra-rational ethical code suffers strain; immediate self-interest or social utility becomes the criterion of social conduct; and only in the sphere of non-political opinion is the faith above the law of reason. The Pope might freely veto heresies and heretical books, but not political doctrine and practice.

As it happened, it was on this side of the ethical problem that modern scientific ethic emerged and began to disengage itself from religious absolutism. So long as the doctrine of divine right remained theoretically paramount in politics, papal and monarchic claims competed like other vested interests; and Catholics and Protestants

[1] Cp. Landon, *Manual of Church Councils*, i, 359; ii, 2, 5.

in turn reproached each other with promoting rebellion. The Catholic Church had, in fact, promoted rebellions innumerable down to the period in which it charged first upon Protestantism and later upon Rationalism the sin of resistance to God's anointed. In this it was only lending itself to the normal practice as against the normal theory, for throughout the ages of faith militant men chronically contravened their professed principles in resisting 'anointed' authority just as in transgressing the accepted commandments. The motive force was simple self-interest, as seen for the moment. Long after English Protestants had travelled from contempt of saints' relics to contempt of altars and churches, they practised slave-trading and anti-Spanish piracy, and were as ready to oppress Ireland as Savonarola had been to oppress Pisa.

Theoretic revision of the moral code, as distinct from 'heretical' reactions against the Church, had been repeatedly adumbrated in the later Middle Ages, as when Marsiglio of Padua and John of Jandun produced in 1342 their DEFENSOR PACIS, a treatise in which the divine right of hereditary monarchy and the secular power of the Church were alike impugned, sovereignty being declared to rest in the people, who, as Christians, collectively constituted the proper political authority in the Church.[1] But it was not till the decisive strife began between Puritanism and the established Church in Protestant England in the seventeenth century, in a State already far on the way to constitutional self-government, that a keenly ratiocinative spirit, employing the potent instrument of the printed book, threw down a challenge which for educated Europe constituted a definite new departure in moral philosophy.

The 'renascence' of the human mind in Europe, after the occultation of two thousand years which began with the fall of liberty in Greece, originated in the main in Italy, by way of a manifold new intellectual life stimulated by the recovery of classic literature. After the collapse of the wild liberty of the Italian republics it was furthered by two great spirits in Catholic France, Rabelais and Montaigne, while Protestant Europe was given up to a mainly barren and disintegrating strife of theologies, creeds, and sects. In England the literary renascence, coming to its strength under Elizabeth and James, overlaid for a time with its florescence the harvest of the Reformation. It was when that harvest came to be reaped under the second of the Stuarts that English thought opened out yet another Reformation by initiating a human science of morals.

[1] Some such heresies were declared to be current in Bohemia in 1430. Landon, *Manual*, i, 76.

Chapter II

TRANSITION FROM THEOLOGICAL TO RATIONAL ETHICS

Medieval Ethic.—If it be true that in the science of Nature "an invention is never, in reality, to be attributed to a single author,"[1] still more true is it in the science of Man. A rational notion of ethics was germinating in Europe long before Hobbes. Even within the medieval Church the necessary development of 'canon law' compelled an approximation to legal principles as developed in the old code of the Roman Empire; and when the monk Gratian in the twelfth century made a digest or harmony of the many conflicting canons produced by Church Councils, he formally committed the Church to principles of 'natural' moral law. As thus:—

> "The human race is ruled by two things, by natural right and by moral practice [or custom]. The natural right is contained in the law and the gospel. By it every one is commanded to do to another what he would wish done to himself, and by it every one is forbidden to do to another what he would not have others do to him.....All laws are either divine or human. *Divine laws exist through nature*, human laws through practice [or custom]; and hence these latter laws are so various among the peoples. Right is the general name; law and practice [custom] are species of right. The law is a written constitution; practice is a long habit or custom. Custom is a right introduced by practice, and it is accepted instead of the law when a law is wanting. *It is all one whether it exists in scripture or reason; for reason recommends also the written law.* If all law exists in reason, then everything will be law which rests merely upon reason, *which is in harmony with religion and discipline, and which conduces to salvation.*"[2]

Here the maxim that divine laws exist through nature, which was to be one of the positions of Hobbes, and the cognate maxim that all law exists in reason, are in effect over-ridden by the stipulations about religion, discipline, and salvation, which leave the

[1] L. Poincaré, *The New Physics*, Eng. tr. 1907, p. 209.
[2] *Decretum Gratiani*, lib. i, Distinct. 1, cap. 1–5, cited by Luthardt, pp. 291–92.

Church, as before, the lawgiver; but the concession inevitably counted for something in the many strifes between the various States and the Church, as did the formal ethic of Thomas Aquinas, the Church's chief doctor. What brought the latent conflict of theories to an issue was on the one hand the process of national development and political strife, and on the other the dynamic effect of new critical thought on the intelligence of educated men in and after the Renaissance.

That the action of rulers and governments during the ages of faith was as generally guided by self-interest as in any other time, no student of history will deny. Religion, indeed, was a motive to the larger extent to which men's ideas turned on religion, as in the case of the anti-heretical and anti-Saracen crusades. The belief that future felicity was to be secured by certain public as well as private action did sometimes affect public action; but it rarely restrained a king from making war on the Pope. That a State should consciously sacrifice an interest for religion was no more dreamt of than it is that a State should really sacrifice an interest for any other reason to-day. Sacrifices for peace, indeed, are much more likely to be undertaken to-day than in the ages of faith. In Italy, in particular, political life was one continuous conflict proceeding on motives of the interests of unscrupulous rulers, States, and factions, all seeking power and profit, the Papacy like the rest.

Machiavelli.—When, then, Machiavelli in the early part of the fifteenth century produced in his PRINCE a manual of policy and conduct for an Italian aspirant to rule, he was not introducing a single moral or immoral idea which was not implicit or explicit in Italian and general European practice. On the face of the book he ignores issues of right and wrong, just as he ignores the claims of the Church; but the former attitude was the normal one of the Papacy, and the second that of all Italians who had fought it. Neither attitude had anything to do with religious belief. Machiavelli was probably a Lucretian theist, believing in a God who did not interfere; but the devout Dante had been an emperor's man, opposed to the Pope. The great service done by Machiavelli to political and ethical thought was, as Bacon recognized, to present men as they are, not as it is thought they ought to be; and as in his PRINCE he plans a course of action for an Italian ruler who should unify Italy, in his DISCOURSES ON LIVY he proceeds by induction from Roman and other history to make out what kinds of action lead to the success of States and what to their downfall.

The fact that he prescribes to rulers a policy of clemency and

beneficence is discounted by his hostile critics on the score that he grounds his precept merely on policy. That was just Machiavelli's way of bringing men to a working ethic in an age of violence and misgovernment. Very clearly he puts his own conviction that conquest of one State or people by another is a source of disintegration to the conqueror.[1] Could he have asked and induced his fellow-Florentines to act on that maxim to the extent of forgoing the conquest of Pisa, he would have been the greatest moral and political reformer of his age; but Florentine Christianity could learn no such lesson. His PRINCE was accordingly a manual of counsels (designed for one or other of the family of the Medici), by the guidance of which a capable statesman might reduce distracted and doomed Italy to a united kingdom; and in so planning he put before an Italy devoid of any large public ideal that of a common effort to expel the alien and retrieve the humiliation of the race. Even that ideal was too large for the Italy of the Papacy; and the book served only as a provocative to political thought in the age which followed the disappearance of all Italian self-government. Written as it was for the special Italian need of his own time, Machiavelli's book could not be either a political or a moral guide to posterity. It was in effect a seed, not a fruit.

> There are still accomplished English scholars who labour to exhibit Machiavelli as seeking to eliminate the distinction between right and wrong; though since Hallam and Macaulay English readers have had a clear lead to a juster judgment. The Rev. J. N. Figgis, who repeats the old charge,[2] endorses also the opinion that "he is the founder of utilitarian ethics." That is a vain saying. Utilitarian ethics enters in the first stage of human morals: the principle is subsumed in the fifth commandment, as in the gospel parable that humility is a way to gain glory; to say nothing of the whole Christian creed of 'salvation.' Machiavelli the man bore torture with fortitude, and did his chief work in the hope of saving his country as a whole—a form of utilitarianism which passed as a matter of course in pagan antiquity, though it transcended the ethical plane of papal Italy. Machiavelli could not banish right from politics when it was not there. He planned for a State in which it might conceivably have grown up.
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> The same able critic writes[3] that "it is impossible to understand Machiavelli without comparing him with Nietzsche, whose *Uebermensch* is but Machiavelli's man of *virtu* stripped [!] of

[1] Refs. in *Pioneer Humanists*, p. 26.
[2] "Machiavelli banishes the notion of right from politics" (*From Gerson to Grotius*, 1907, p. 95).
[3] *Id.* p. 97.

those public ends which make even Cesare Borgia less odious." The criticism confutes itself. As the critic goes on to avow: "There is indeed a difference.....Machiavelli was always considering the practical problem: How is Italy to be saved?"[1] And that makes all the difference in the world. As Mr. Figgis further admits, Cavour was for the nineteenth century what Machiavelli wanted in the sixteenth.[2] Machiavelli reincarnated would have so acclaimed him. Nearer the Borgian age, the rulers who most nearly realized his ideal were such as Elizabeth and Cromwell, both of whom he would have impartially acclaimed; though both would have professed to scout him as a guide.

For other countries in later ages, could he have foreseen them, Machiavelli would never have dreamed of writing THE PRINCE. Frederick the Great, the most callous of all modern 'Machiavellians,' with consummate hypocrisy denounced Machiavelli, and applied his counsel where in Machiavelli's view it would be wholly needless. Bismarck, the great 'Machiavellian' of the nineteenth century, would equally with the last Kaiser have incurred the Italian's censure as working the ultimate disintegration of their country by wanton seeking of conquest. And they both claimed to be led by Christian beliefs and principles. As Mr. Figgis tacitly admits again and again, it is not Machiavelli but his 'followers' (whether avowed or unavowed) who flout ethic where ethic is common sense, defying international justice under circumstances which condemn them, where Machiavelli really sought a saviour for an Italy that was in process of being trampled underfoot.

The crowning misconception and self-confutation in Mr. Figgis's survey is the assertion[3] that "The Council of Constance had decreed in its dealings with Hus that faith was not to be kept with heretics; if for heretics we read enemies, and for Church read State, we have *the whole of Machiavelli's system* in this one decree." Then Machiavelli's system was invented by the Christian Church, utilitarianism and all—if it was not previously invented by Cicero, who, virtuously countering Cæsar, would not keep faith with pirates. But Mr. Figgis does not rightly know Machiavelli, who would have pronounced the treachery of the Council of Constance a deadly stupidity on the part of the Church, one of the blunders that he counted worse than crimes, availing less than nothing for its purpose, securing neither victory nor settlement, cutting the ground from under all the Council's hopes of pacification, and preparing the way for the Church's ultimate disintegration. The utilitarianism of Machiavelli was of another order.

[1] Again: "We must always remember his purpose.....Social justice had to him no meaning apart from the one great end of the salvation of his country" (p. 86).
[2] *Id.* p. 85.
[3] *Id.* p. 89.

Not only does Machiavelli never *doctrinally* cancel the idea of right and wrong: he was by his counsels forcing its reconstruction where the Church *had* cancelled it. Not merely the Council of Constance but the Papacy in its general policy had substituted for the idea of right a conception of ecclesiastical 'reason of State,' conceived alternately as the Will of God and the Will of the Pope. And this goes back to the theistic ethic of the Bible and the Fathers. What is more: as we saw at our outset, the idea of right is doctrinally and didactically cancelled in our own age by such a various set of teachers as Bagehot, with his 'strength is merit'; Carlyle, with his 'right is might,' which is the equivalent of 'might is right'; and Wundt, with *his* manipulation of the latter thesis. Save for some literary comment on Carlyle's doctrine, I can recall no ethical repudiation of these positions by any of the authorities who continue to charge upon Machiavelli the demoralization of Christian Europe. He is vilified for looking over the gate: they have with impunity stolen the horse.

Where Machiavelli was ostensibly quite unethical was in his doctrine of the importance of a well-planned public religion, *even if false*—a thesis which he professed to support from Roman history. He was here echoing the Greek Polybius; and was of course quite mistaken as to the character of early Roman religion, which was no such planned invention as he supposed. But when we find him joining to this doctrine a complaint that the Catholic Church had made Italians irreligious and vicious, it is hard to be sure that the whole doctrine is not ironical. In any case, the doctrine of the fitness of pious fraud is officially Christian.

Contemporary with Machiavelli was Pomponazzi, whose treatise on the immortality of the soul (1516) made a resounding noise, not as being new in its doctrine, for disbelief on immortality had long been common among educated Italians, but because of its fullness of argumentation and its openness of avowal, coming from a professor of philosophy. It had for ethics a special importance in that it declared morality to be independent of belief in future rewards and punishments. True virtue, it affirmed, is its own reward. The fact that Pomponazzi claimed to be an orthodox Catholic, standing by the scholastic principle of a twofold truth—one truth for philosophy and one for faith—and the fact that he was protected by the Pope, perhaps made his teaching weigh all the more for Rationalism among educated men, even Catholics.

The Reformation.—Ostensibly the greatest of all shocks to the orthodox ethic was the outbreak of the Reformation in Germany, with its sequence in the other countries of northern and western

Europe. According to Catholic historians, and, indeed, by the admission alike of Luther, Calvin, and English and Dutch Protestants, the widespread subversion of ecclesiastical authority had a bad effect on the morals of ordinary life, though, on the other hand, by universal testimony, from Boccaccio to Luther, there could not exist a more immoral city than Rome itself. The inference would seem to be that in the Protestant countries a populace whose moral guidance had been wholly authoritarian became lax when the old authority was overthrown—another proof of the inefficiency of a religious as distinguished from a reasoned ethic. But while the new moral pretentiousness of Protestantism may have involved an exceptional amount of hypocrisy, it is not seriously to be supposed that Italy, Spain, and Catholic France at any time were morally superior communities to the Protestantized States or to the French Huguenots; though the endless strifes which arose in the Protestant area drove many back to the old Church. For there was really no new disregard of ethic as distinct from custom.

It was not so much the explosion of the Reformation itself as the political events which followed that prepared the way for a new adjustment of ethics on political lines. One of the first fruits of the innovation was a great nervousness among Protestants over the charge—audacious as coming from Papists—of being rebellious and revolutionary. Luther in particular became violently reactionary and hyper-monarchic in his fear of encouraging anything like a popular rising. His repudiation of the peasants who trusted him is one of the chief blots on his reputation. Directly influential in shattering the old spiritual fabric of things, he was very anxious to maintain the political, for the sufficient reason that he dreaded the discredit of his religious cause. "It would indeed be hard to find a more thoroughgoing expression of the doctrine of 'Passive Obedience' than that of Luther's first address to the peasants. He scoffs at the idea of standing up for one's rights."[1] "It is with Luther that the long catena of Protestant divines on the side of non-resistance quoted by Salmasius begins."[2]

French Evolution.—It was not, then, Protestantism, but the special circumstances of one Protestant country, that made for a new founding of ethics on the side of politics. As regards new thinking on ethics in general, the greatest hardihood was shown in

[1] Figgis, as cited, p. 65.

[2] *Id.* p. 81. Mr. Figgis seems to forget the history of England when he excepts only Scotland from the Protestant nations which adhered to Luther's position. It was only in the reaction after the Rebellion that the doctrine of the divine right of kings became general in England.

Catholic France. Of the serious content of Rabelais it has been justly said that it is an acclamation of "science and friendship," with a more or less open contempt for the whole theological machinery—a contempt the expression of which often put him in peril. But in the last quarter of the century Montaigne, in the great miscellany which so skilfully evaded all conflict with the Church, conveyed what all the after ages have seen to be a still more radical dissent from the faith, with a mordant impeachment of its morality, theoretical and practical. He had been in his youth a member of a Catholic combination, and he knew what zealous faith meant in conduct. The abominable Massacre of St. Bartholomew, in honour of which the Pope illuminated Rome and struck a medal, drove Montaigne out of public life, and elicited his cry that "there is no enmity so extreme as the Christian: our zeal works wonders when it seconds our bent towards hate, cruelty, ambition, avarice, detraction, rebellion.....Our religion is framed to extirpate vices: it shields, nourishes, and incites them."[1]

The Massacre of St. Bartholomew may be reckoned one of the turning-points in the development of European ethics. It was engineered by a woman, applauded by a Pope, collaborated in by all the churches of Paris, and carried out with the zealous help of a Christian mob. As a simple historic episode it is a memorable comment alike on the Catholic thesis that the Reformation demoralized life and on the later Catholic thesis that it was atheism that inspired the massacres of the French Revolution. More than twenty years passed before the immense success of the SATYRE MENIPPÉE (1594) revealed that the fanatics were really a minority in literate France, and that utilitarian morality was much better than the religious. It is to be remembered that the SATYRE itself was the work of believing Catholics; that at least seven governors of provinces had refused to engage in the massacre; and that the public executioners of Troyes and Lyon had similarly refused.[2] But there is no record of an appeal to religion against religion. Compassion and common goodness were the countering forces; and the new party of *politiques*, Catholics all, turned to the test of utility for their code of action.

The record of the destruction wrought by the wars of religion in France serves to account for the moral reaction which followed.

[1] *Essais*, liv. ii, ch. xii. Ed. Firmin-Didot, i, 446. Similarly Montluc: "Ce beau manteau de religion, qui a servi aux uns et aux autres, pour executer leur vengeances, et nous faire entremanger" (Mémoires, xxvi, 86; cited by Lingard, *Hist. of England*, ed. 1855, vi, 138 *n.*).

[2] Duruy, *Hist. de France*, ed. 1880, ii, 37.

In 1580 it was estimated that 800,000 persons had perished by war and massacre since 1560; that nine cities had been razed, 280 villages burned, 128,000 houses destroyed.[1] And after that there were fourteen years of chronic civil war to come. France was covered with ruin and blood from end to end. Henri III assassinated the Guises, and the Church and the new Catholic League repudiated Henri, who was assassinated in turn by the Church's agency. And the shrewd Henri IV, who took the only way out of the inferno by changing his confession of faith, not for the first time, having indeed no such concern about creeds as he had about establishing a powerful monarchy, forgave the blood-guilty Catherine de Medicis on retrospect for all her political crimes in simple recognition of her dynastic perplexities.[2] There was certainly no evangelical motive or memory behind that unexampled forgiveness, which was dictated by Henri's own masculine common sense, and was prescribed to him by no Huguenot.

Charron.—It was in the recuperating France of Henri IV that there appeared the epoch-making work of the cleric Charron, DE LA SAGESSE (1601), the work of a sometime zealous champion of Catholicism, converted to 'naturalism' by reading Montaigne. It sets out with the declaration that "the true study of man is man," which Pope made his text in the next century; and the long preface explains that, having previously treated of divine wisdom, the author is not minded here to discuss it, but limits himself to the wisdom that is human. "The virtue and probity of theologians is altogether morose, austere, depressed, sad, apprehensive, and commonplace (*populaire*); philosophy such as this book teaches is altogether gay, free, joyous, and, if one may so say, merry (*enjouée*), but nevertheless very potent, noble, generous, and rare." Such was the flag under which there entered what has been described as "the first attempt made in a modern language to construct a system of morals without the aid of theology."[3] Despite the promise of the preface, it is very seriously written; and it was this quality, and not any unseemliness, that brought upon Charron a pious persecution which lasted till he was struck down by apoplexy in the street—a death which was of course pronounced by the faithful to be providential.

Nowhere, perhaps, was the book more influential than in England. Samson Lennard appears to have issued his translation in the year in which the original was published, and at least ten editions appeared in the next twenty years, all without any trace of

[1] Duruy, p. 99.
[2] *Id.* p. 69.
[3] Buckle, *Introd. to Hist. of Civilization*, 1-vol. ed. p. 296.

religious protest. It sufficed in England that Charron, like Montaigne, used the language of devout theism, while ignoring the Christian creed. It is only in respect of orderly arrangement, indeed, that Charron's work can be called a 'system'; it is rather a didactic survey of the field of conduct. There is no attempt to seek psychological or logical foundations for moral principles, though there is a preliminary physio-psychology in the manner of the time, with an analysis of the mind, and elaborate catalogues of virtues and vices, as of social degrees and subordinations. At most there is a system of duties, pointing back to classic manuals, with an avowal of preference for Plato and Socrates over Aristotle.[1] The purpose is to teach wisdom; and any direct inquiry into the why of conduct would mean a clash with theology, which the author sedulously avoids. But indirectly or incidentally he says quite enough to point to a naturalistic foundation for ethics, despite the customary tributes to religion.

Not only does he remind his readers, following Montaigne, that they are of the religion into which they chanced to be born, and would have been of any other if born into that, offering them for his part a creed of simple deism: he expressly rejects all ascetic doctrine, and makes virtue consist in wise living, here modifying the revived Stoicism which had been much disseminated among the educated class in the age of turmoil. Even to go thus far was to challenge the resentment of the still fanatical clergy; and it is matter for astonishment that Charron should in passing throw out a proposition so completely 'naturalistic' as to outgo any naturalism theretofore published. In giving a non-committal account of 'the soul' in terms of current doctrines he in effect makes it a function of the brain, calling it 'organic,' and making its variations depend upon those of its instrument. And after giving a quite primitively materialistic explanation of the national characters of northerners, southerners, and men of the middle region, allotting characteristics in terms of climate as others had done before him, he throws out in one sudden sentence a suggestion which reduces moral bias to physique and environment. The northerners, he sums up, excel in body, and the southerners in intelligence, while those of the middle regions partake of both and are temperate in all. "And we thereby learn," he adds, "that their morals (*mœurs*) are in truth neither vices nor virtues, but works of nature, which to correct or renounce altogether is more than difficult, but to sweeten and temper, reducing the extremes to mediocrity, is the work of virtue."[2] He does not

[1] Liv. i, ch. 43.

[2] *Id.* i, ch. 43, *end*.

go on to say what *are* virtues and vices; the effect of his fling is to suggest that virtues and vices *consist* in natural bias.

English Evolution.—Charron's ethic then is, in a word, that man is a semi-barbarous animal, but that human wisdom, attainable by self-study, may guide him. This, put in great detail, with all the nervous vivacity developed by French forensic rhetoric, with much of the matter and something of the *verve* if not of the reach and depth of Montaigne, must have been assimilated by thousands of English readers in the first half of the seventeenth century. It was doubtless read by Bacon, who, though he never quotes Charron, may be held to have had his eye on him as on others of the past age when he puts the one criticism that indicates his vision of the nature of the ethical problem. Very justly he writes of the moralists in general that, "if they had stayed a little longer upon the inquiry concerning the roots of good and evil, they had given a great light to that which followed—and specially if they had consulted with nature they had made their doctrine less prolix and more profound."[1] But one of Bacon's own countrymen, Hooker, had actually "consulted with nature" to some purpose in his ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY, laying down a deduction of first principles in politics so far solid that it was adopted later by both Hobbes and Locke; while one of his incidental propositions—that all governments alike rest upon opinion[2] (really borrowed from Cicero)[3]—was assimilated by Hume, and, as his, has been much commended. Hooker is, in fact, the initiator for England of the whole way of reasoning from a social contract made by men in a state of Nature, to safeguard themselves from their own mutual strife; and he even framed for the future use of Hobbes the sophism that a contract once made between a people and a ruler is perpetual, "because corporations are immortal."[4]

It was doubtless the nature of the political situation under James that made Bacon refrain from discussing such problems of political ethics: it could not have been any unreadiness to assent to Hooker's theological positions. Committed as he was by his whole philosophy to the search for practical results, Bacon was also committed by his tactic to an attitude of homage wherever possible towards the theology which he was concerned to repel from the field of natural science; and in so many words he ultimately declares, in the expanded Latin version of his early survey of the field of knowledge, that (in one rendering) "ethics ought to be

[1] *Advancement of Learning*, bk. ii; Routledge's ed. of *Works*, p. 114.
[2] *Ecclesiastical Polity*, bk. i, ch. x, § 8. [3] *De Officiis*, bk. ii, c. 7. [4] *Polity*, as cited.

entirely subservient to theology and obedient to the precepts thereof."[1] The Latin runs: *ethica obsequium theologiæ omnino præstare debet, ejusque præceptis morigera esse;* and when this is rendered:[2] "moral philosophy ought to give a constant attention to the doctrines of divinity and be obedient to them," the force is somewhat tamed, especially when we note the sequel: "yet so as it may yield of itself within its own limits many sound and profitable directions." Still, this is no fulfilment of the earlier hint about going to the roots of good and evil and consulting with nature; and beyond thus suggesting a limited field for an independent moral philosophy Bacon does no such service to ethics as he indirectly did to science by perpetually insisting on a critical method. Even, indeed, in his insistence that in all things of nature men must explore second causes, he had been preceded by the Spaniard Huarte (1530–1592), who put aside the theological method in that connection more peremptorily than did Bacon.[3]

Grotius.—For practical purposes Grotius,[4] whose famous treatise, DE JURE BELLI ET PACIS (1625), appeared soon after Bacon's DE AUGMENTIS SCIENTIARUM, made much the greater impact on the European mind on the side of ethics. The Thirty Years' War, devastating Germany far more ruinously even than France had been wrecked by her wars of religion, was now in process, and thoughtful men everywhere caught at the new hope of international law held out by the Dutch scholar. He did indeed eloquently urge a better political morality upon the ever-warring Christian world, declaring that it exhibited a ferocity from which barbarians would recoil, and passing a memorable veto, for instance, on all wars for securing the balance of power;[5] and his preliminary position as to the moral 'Law of Nature' was a forcible reiteration of all that had been thus far conveyed by that formula. The social character of man, he insisted, was the practical foundation of law, and this by implication applied to moral codes. Here we have the standpoint of the ethics of the next century. But the method still remains didactic or monitory, and the crux of ethical choice is neither theoretically nor practically faced. The form of enunciation is still à priori.

Natural [*i.e.*, moral] law,[6] says Grotius, is "the dictate of right reason, pointing out a moral guilt or rectitude to be inherent in any action, on account of its agreement or disagreement with our rational

[1] *De Augmentis*, bk. vii, c. 3.
[2] In ed. Ellis and Spedding.
[3] In the *Examen de Ingenios*, 1575. First English trans. 1594.
[4] Latinized name of Huig or Hugo de Groot.
[5] Lib. ii, c. i, § 17, 1.
[6] *Jus naturale.*

[and social][1] nature; and consequently that such an action is either forbidden or enjoined by God, the author of nature."[2] This obviously raises two issues: (1) What of the questions of conduct or particular action upon which men are *not* agreed; and (2) what of the fitness or the means of giving effect to any agreement? The gravity of those issues becomes sufficiently plain when we find that on purely Biblical grounds Grotius concedes the moral rightness of both slavery[3] and patriarchal polygamy,[4] though not of polyandry. It may be that the political expediencies of Dutch rule in the East Indies dictated the condonation of slavery at a time when it had virtually disappeared from western Europe. But the Biblical presupposition was evidently the deciding authority on both heads; and 'right reason' is thus still in tutelage.

It was such moral incoherences as these, coupled with such impractical judgments as the verdict that the armies of States at war *ought* to have free passage through the territories of neighbouring States, that ultimately brought the famous treatise of Grotius into disrepute. It is common to charge that disrepute on his discursive literary mode of multiplying illustrative and ornamental quotations from the classics. That, however, had done much to win him his first vogue, being the standing expository usage of the time throughout Europe, a result of the rhetorical evolution alike of the bar and the pulpit, and nowhere more in evidence than in the DE AUGMENTIS of Bacon, where the fugal rhetorical movement gives a constant note as of stately poetry to what professes to be above all things a practical investigation of man's needs in the intellectual field. Bacon's hold on posterity, so far as it still subsists, is largely a matter of this emotional pitch and the congruous art of his utterance. But the ethical performance which was to rouse the next ages to a decisive movement of debate upon the whole problem of ethics was to come from an English Conservative who innovated as deeply in literary method as in critical temper; who never let the adjective weaken the noun or the adverb the verb; who wrote the most concise and pregnant English in a period of great prose; and who gave to his argument and his phrase all the pains that his predecessors had ever bestowed upon their embellishments of classical quotation.[5]

[1] These words are added justifiably by Grotius's editor, Barbeyrac. See Whewell *in loc.*

[2] Lib. i, c. i, § 10; Hallam's rendering.

[3] Lib. ii, c. v, § 29, 1; lib. iii, c. vii.

[4] Lib. v, c. ix.

[5] At the close of his *Leviathan* Hobbes tells how he has "neglected the ornament of quoting ancient poets, orators, and philosophers, contrary to the custom of late time," giving his reasons. And, without avowing quotation, he puts a thought dwelt upon by Bacon: "If we will reverence the age, the present is the oldest."

Chapter III

HOBBES AND HIS AGE

§ 1. *The European Preparation.*

It was in an era of apparently interminable strife that Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) made his attempt to bring the incessant turmoil of men's conflicting wills to the touchstone and the curb of a systematic political ethic. As we have seen, the need for peace was impelling thought in that direction ; and all theological attempts had proved fruitless. The humane Dutch theologian Arminius[1] (1560–1609), called upon by his colleagues to defend Calvinism against those who attacked it as repugnant to morals but proposed only illogical modifications of its theistic doctrine of predestination, found himself unable to justify it, and sought in turn for a compromise which should save moral appearances, while holding to the concept of a Ruling Providence. His most practical service lay in an appeal for toleration, which was the last thing that the mass of religionists were prepared to act upon.

Only the established power of Henri IV could have imposed on Catholic France the Edict of Nantes (1598), securing liberty of conscience to the Huguenots. In the year of the death of Arminius (1609) the great Dutch statesman John van Olden Barneveldt succeeded in bringing about a truce with Spain, after forty years of struggle for Dutch independence ; but at once the United Provinces found themselves fiercely embroiled in the theological strife between Remonstrants (Arminians) and Gomarists (Calvinists, led by Gomar), which bade fair to end in civil war. It was complicated by the fact that Barneveldt, who had carried the truce against the will of Prince Maurice and the Calvinist clergy, stood also for the State sovereignty of the province of Holland as against the sovereignty of the States-General, and conducted the Remonstrant movement with an eye to his political ideal ; while Maurice joined hands with the Calvinist clergy, whom the Barneveldt party in the province of Holland strove to subordinate to State control as regarded public controversy. When the political quarrel came to

[1] Latinized name of Jakob Hermanns or Hermansen.

a head Maurice, as head of the army of the United Provinces, forcibly intervened, and Barneveldt, after an iniquitous trial, was beheaded in 1619. Religious hatred had gone far to undo the unity wrought by forty years of common struggle and suffering. All the kindred of Arminius had in his early youth been massacred by the Spaniards in one of their unimaginable butcheries; and now the Protestants hated each other as bitterly as they had ever hated the Spaniards. And when the doctrines of Arminius made way in the Church of England against the Calvinism which had dominated most of its theologians under Elizabeth[1] and in the first half of the reign of James, the same theological temper of hate began to incubate there. The Arminian Laud, as Bishop and as Archbishop (1633), sought ecclesiastical unity not by toleration but by systematic coercion; and the end of his career was his execution in 1644. His Calvinistic antagonists were as little disposed to toleration as he.

It is a curious and ill-explained fact that Calvinism, with its 'high' doctrine of fore-ordination, in that age commonly found favour with those who stood for popular government, while monarchists were usually of the Arminian persuasion. The facts are hardly accounted for by Buckle's brilliant generalization, summed up in his epigram that "it is evident to the most vulgar calculation that a religion which concentrates our charity upon ourselves is less expensive than one which directs our charity to others."[2] The South German Protestant princes were mostly Calvinistic; and Luther was at once monarchist and predestinarian. A working solution may be found in the fact that Calvin framed a quasi-democratic system of Church government, and in the inference that those who accepted his theology were prejudiced in favour of his polity, and *vice versa*. But James I, who hated his Scottish Calvinists because of their insubordination, was himself a Calvinist; and under the influence of his then Archbishop, the Calvinist Abbott, he zealously sought the ruin of the Dutch Arian-Arminian Vorstius, besides thwarting in every way the Arminian party of Barneveldt, who opposed the Calvinists on republican grounds very much as James did on monarchic grounds at home.

According to a high authority, "the iron discipline of Calvinism .....always came into favour when there was an immediate prospect of a death-struggle with Rome";[3] and, while the Lutherans

[1] Cp. Principal Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, 2nd ed. 1866, pp. 168-69.

[2] *Introd. to Hist. of Civ. in England*, one-vol. ed. p. 481. Buckle seems to have thought that, while Calvinists held by 'faith,' Arminians held by 'works.' But it was not so. Arminius was a thorough 'evangelical.'

[3] Gardiner, *The Thirty Years' War*, ed. 1889, p. 17.

remained deferential to all established State authorities, the Calvinists were ready to discount any in the name of theocracy. In Holland they collaborated with Arminians so long as it was a question of fighting Catholic Spain, but stood by the military leader against the middle-class republicans who would subject all churches to the State, while tolerating all. The outcome was that the House of Orange in Holland made common cause with the democratic Calvinists against Barneveldt and the Arminians, who stood for the State—in that case the separate government of Holland, with its claim to State sovereignty. The Arminians, in fact, were for State as against ecclesiastical government; and the union of the Prince with the Calvinist populace was one of common hostility to a middle-class party that stood for the State rights of the province against the orthodox clergy and the military chief, who, being strongest in the other provinces, supported the authority of the States-General over Holland.

If we would realize fully the motives of Hobbes, it is important to understand how in democratic Holland as elsewhere religion was thus tending to destroy civil polity. It was the original turbulence of the Calvinist clergy, fanatically disposed to usurp political power, and as unfit to exercise it as were their later congeners in Scotland, that built up the counter-creed of State sovereignty in Holland. Barneveldt had been the greatest force, after William of Orange, in overcoming the separatist tendencies of the various provinces in the long struggle with Spain. But for him the independence of the Netherlands might never have been won. It seems to have been the prevalence in those provinces of crude fanaticism that mainly moved him to cling finally to the State rights of Holland, where the party of tolerance could hope to keep the clergy under control. For that ideal he in turn was ready to go the length of setting up for Holland a separate military force; and the end of it all was his execution, virtually by the command of Prince Maurice, whose guide and protector he had been in the old days of the war for independence. Thus in the Protestant Netherlands as in Catholic France, and in the Catholic dominion in the Low Countries, the blind play of religio-political faction cast out humanity, solving all debate in blood; and when the Netherlands crouched into order under the military chief and his obedient soldiery the frightful drama of the Thirty Years' War in Germany carried on the endless tale of blood and tears. And while that was at the height of its ruinous evolution England in turn took up the dance of death. It is at that stage of Christian history that Hobbes emerges.

Already in his boyhood many Englishmen had assimilated the doctrine, first formulated for the modern world by the French *politiques* in the later stage of the religious wars, that not the creeds of the churches but the laws of the land were the proper regulators of public life. Ben Jonson, in his VOLPONE (1607), makes Sir Politick Would-Be profess the alleged creed of "Nic Machiavel and Monsieur Bodin" to that effect. Jonson acridly implies that the *politiques* were of no religion at all; but the essence or basis of their principle was the perception worded by President Jeannin, that "a peace with two religions was better than a war with none." After 1607 English opinion became steadily more and more coloured with theology, and, though there was a school of "anti-Scripturalists" all along and at the height of the Rebellion, the saner secular temper of the days of Elizabeth and Henri IV had in general given way before a culminating deadlock between intolerant Puritanism and intolerant prelatism. Hobbes, doubtless primed by Bacon, saw the coming consequences, and began planning for the trouble before the culmination.

The one ostensibly stable State in northern Europe was France, put upon a firm monarchic footing by Henri IV, and kept there for Louis XIII by Richelieu. Even there, under Mazarin, the disturbing element underlying the Fronde insurrection was religion—the virtual Calvinism of the new sect of Jansenists. In the Netherlands the province of Holland was still able from time to time to thwart the policy of its Stadholder and military head, the Prince of Orange; and after it had thrown its weight against him in securing the Peace of Munster in 1648 there came another death-struggle, in which the military chief once more put down the republican party.

§ 2. *English Puritanism.*

In England the drift of things political towards civil war, foreseen by Bacon, grew more marked soon after Charles had succeeded James, bringing no better judgment to a worsening political situation. In the House of Commons Sir John Eliot, who from being a devoted partisan of Buckingham soon became his fiercest assailant, early distinguished himself as a ruthless persecutor, in a party which professed among other things to be defending religious liberty against persecution. After Eliot had died in prison, the passion of the Puritan party in Parliament for dominion over conscience grew only more marked, Parliament being thus made definitely an instrument of theological tyranny one way or the other. Both sides, popular and royalist, Puritan and prelatist, were absolutely committed to

the negation of all rights of conscience but their own; and a 'Brownist' or Separatist had no more chance of mercy from parliamentarians than from Anglicans. It was only (1) the development of yet other sects, notably the Independents and the Congregationalists, (2) the ultimate predominance of Cromwell, and (3) his determination to protect his soldiers of those denominations from Presbyterian tyranny, that prevented the establishment in England of a Puritan inquisition as despotic as that of Rome. Or, rather let us say, it was only Cromwell's prevention of a Presbyterian tyranny that made possible the establishment even for a time of a Puritan Commonwealth; for the Presbyterian despotism, if unchecked, would infallibly have wrecked the parliamentary cause and so brought about the establishment of a strong monarchic tyranny.

> The grossly tyrannous character of the Calvinist political ideal, though demonstrated historically in the rule of Calvin at Geneva, and clearly set forth for English readers by Green, is still so commonly ignored in the retrospect of unstudious admirers of Puritanism that it may be well to cite Green's summary of the doctrine of Cartwright in the days of Elizabeth, when the wood was green:—
>
> "He had studied at Geneva; he returned with a fanatical faith in Calvinism, and in the system of Church government which Calvin had devised; and as Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge he used to the full the opportunities which his chair gave him of propagating his opinions. No leader of a religious party ever deserved less of after sympathy than Cartwright. He was unquestionably learned and devout, but his bigotry was that of a medieval inquisitor.....His declamations against ceremonies and superstition, however, had little weight with Elizabeth or her Primates; what scared them was his reckless advocacy of a scheme of ecclesiastical government which placed the State beneath the feet of the Church. The absolute rule of bishops, indeed, he denounced as begotten of the devil; but the absolute rule of Presbyters he held to be established by the word of God. For the Church modelled after the fashion of Geneva he claimed an authority which surpassed the wildest dreams of the masters of the Vatican. All the spiritual power and jurisdiction, the decreeing of doctrine, the ordering of ceremonies, lay wholly, according to his Calvinistic creed, in the hands of the ministers of the Church. To them, too, belonged the supervision of public morals. In an ordered arrangement of classes and synods they were to govern their flocks, to regulate their own order, to decide in matters of faith, to administer 'discipline.' Their weapon was excommunication, and they were responsible for its use to none but Christ. The province of the civil ruler was

simply 'to see their decrees executed and to punish the contemners of them'; for the spirit of such a system as this naturally excluded all toleration of practice or belief. With the despotism of a Hildebrand Cartwright combined the cruelty of a Torquemada. Not only was Presbyterianism to be established as the one legal form of Church government, but all other forms, Episcopalian and Separatist, were to be ruthlessly put down. For heresy there was the punishment of death. Never had the doctrine of persecution been urged with such a blind and reckless ferocity. 'I deny,' wrote Cartwright, 'that upon repentance there ought to follow any pardon of death..... Heretics ought to be put to death now. If this be bloody and extreme, I am content to be so counted with the Holy Ghost.'"[1]

Before Eliot joined the Puritans he had urged that in the much-desired war with Spain the fitting out of the fleet might be paid for by "those penalties the Papists have already incurred"—in a word, by wholesale confiscation of Catholic property, a proposal described by one of his warmest historical eulogists as one "which if it had been translated into figures would have created a tyranny too monstrous to be contemplated with equanimity."[2] When, after his breach with Buckingham, Eliot had made common cause with the Puritans, he was as eager to punish Arminians as he had been to plunder Catholics. The historian puts it that "*because* Charles treated the religion of the nation as a matter with which the nation had no concern whatever, *therefore* the Commons attempted to define the doctrine of the nation and to inflict penalties upon those who refused to accept it."[3] But the Puritans would have striven to impose their will if the king had been tolerant. It was in terms of their own religious ideals rather than "much against their will" that Eliot and Pym were led "to convert the House of Commons into a school of theology one day, as they would have to convert it into a school of law on the next. At one time the bishops, at another time the judges, would be called to account before a body which had never studied profoundly the subjects with which bishops and judges were respectively conversant." And this duly followed from the presupposition to which the historian does homage, that the believer was in communion with God and the recipient of divine guidance for all purposes.

Eliot called formally for the persecution of Arminians in the Church. "Are there Arminians?" he asked in the Committee on Religion—"for so they are properly called. Look to those.....; let us observe their books and sermons; let us strike at them, and make our charge at them."[4] The doctrine amounted, as

[1] *Short History*, ed. 1881, pp. 455–56.
[2] Gardiner, *Hist. of England, 1603–1642*, ed. 1893, v. 191.
[3] *Id.* vii, 40.
[4] *Id.* vii, 42.

the historian says, not merely to justifying a revolution; it amounted, as he further avows, to a parliamentary denial of liberty of conscience. "The mere assent of the House of Commons to certain doctrinal propositions which had never been legally binding upon any one was to be made the touchstone of orthodoxy. Unpopular theologians were to be summoned to give account of their actions and opinions before a tribunal which recognized no fixed legal procedure, and which would decide according to the popular instinct rather than according to any certain rule of law. It was perhaps inevitable that it should be so. The King's claim to rule as seemed right in his own eyes without taking the national conscience into account was met by the claim of the House of Commons to rule as seemed right in its own eyes without taking the rights of individual conscience into account."

And Eliot, the foremost figure in the Puritan party up to the time of his imprisonment, had a fit successor in Pym. Quoting the remark of Forster[1]: "It appears to me that Pym, and of all the managers Pym alone, argued the accusation and conviction of the Earl [of Strafford] as of the substance of eternal right in opposition to the technical forms which the defence assumed," Mr. C. E. Wade justly remarks[2] that "Such a view would justify every partisan murder since the beginning of the world." As Gardiner had previously commented: "The time might soon arrive when treason would be as light a word in the mouth of a Member of Parliament as damnation had been in the mouth of a medieval ecclesiastic"; and again: "It might be well that the law of treason should be altered so as to include some actions which had been done by Strafford; but it was hard upon him, and of the worst possible example to future times, to inflict the penalty of death under an interpretation of the law which was now heard of for the first time."[3] And from the moment when Pym became the controller of the parliamentary policy, of which up to that point the results were accepted at the restoration, whereas all the later results were cancelled, "failure, and, it must be confessed, deserved failure, was the result of Pym's leadership."[4]

What we are here concerned to note is his total lack of the spirit of equity. When, in 1641, a riotous mob of London apprentices savagely assaulted Archbishop Williams in Palace Yard, and again sought to wreck the altar and organ in Westminster Abbey, the House of Lords appealed to the House of Commons to join in a declaration against such rioting, and in a petition to the King for a guard, Pym's reply was: "God forbid the House of

[1] Forster's *John Pym*, 1837, p. 163.
[2] *History*, as cited, ix.
[3] Wade's *John Pym*, 1912, p. 137.
[4] *Id.* x, 34.

Commons should proceed in any way to dishearten people to obtain their just desires in such a way."[1] A little later Pym was arguing in the Commons that "The Great Council of the kingdom should sit as a free council.....no force about them without consent..... not only a guard of soldiers, but many officers in Whitehall."[2] A year had not passed when Palace Yard was filled by a crowd of women who "shouted for peace," and who on the next day came again, beating at the door of the House and crying: "Give us that dog Pym." Thereupon "Pym's famous guard fired powder; still the women pressed on. They threw stones; then the soldiers shot bullets; two men behind the crowd were killed.....Just then a troop of Waller's horse came up from the city," and the women shouted: "Waller's dogs." Then "the men drew their swords; they laid about them first with the flat, then with the edge. The women fell bleeding, were trampled on; the scene was horrible." D'Ewes tells how this was done "by the procurement of Pym and others," and how the horsemen "hunted the said women up and down the back Palace Yard, and wounded them with their swords and pistols."[3] The women were doing what the male mobs had done before, when Pym said "God forbid" that they should be checked.

Equity had no place in the Puritan ideal. "Only partisan rancour," observes Gardiner, "can throw the blame of the Civil War on either side exclusively. Pym.....had been bred up too long on the commonplaces of Puritanism" to think of toleration. "The grand vision of religious liberty never lightened his path. The hard problem of toleration which his own generation and the next were called to solve never presented itself to his mind as a question worthy of consideration.....Fatal as his choice was, nothing else could fairly have been expected of him. If he had not shared the errors of his followers, he would never have been their leader."[4] If we so judge of Pym, let us so judge of the other side, and further recognize what kind of ethic it was that Hobbes met with the ethic of passive obedience. After Cromwell had put down rebellion in Ireland by massacre, the English record fully matched that of Catholic Spain in the Low Countries. "Englishmen and Irishmen were to one another but noxious beasts of prey to be slaughtered without mercy. All feeling of a common humanity had been lost between them."[5] It was in this morally bankrupt world

[1] Clarendon, ed. Macray, iv, 114.
[2] Forster, *Arrest of the Five Members*, ed. 1860, p. 119, citing D'Ewes.
[3] Wade, pp. 304–5, citing Miss McArthur, *Eng. Histor. Review*, xxiv, 698 (1809).
[4] *History*, x, 32–33. [5] *Id.* x, 176.

that Hobbes propounded an ethic of frankly self-regarding humanity that proposed to secure peace by non-resistance.

§ 3. *Hobbes's Ethical System.*

As early as 1628, Hobbes published his translation of Thucydides, with the express intention of putting his countrymen on their guard against the dangers of democracy. His first original treatises, the HUMAN NATURE and DE CORPORE POLITICO, were written and perhaps circulated in MS. in 1640, when the quarrel between King and Parliament had gone so high that in that year he decided to seek safety in France. He himself has told us that he was prematurely born through his mother's terror at the coming of the Spanish Armada ; and that she bore twins, himself and Fear. Not that he was either physically or intellectually a coward, but that he was constantly and intensely apprehensive of the evils of war, of which the bulk of European history had so long been an object-lesson. As he wrote from France to his young patron, the Earl of Devonshire, in 1641 : "The dispute for [precedence] between the spiritual and the civil power has of late, more than any other thing in the world, been the cause of civil wars in all parts of Christendom." It was in 1642, just before the beginning of the Civil War, that he printed a few copies of his Latin treatise DE CIVE, connectedly presenting his psychology and his ethics. Not till 1647 was it really published (at Amsterdam), with a new 'Preface to the Reader' explaining its relation to his general philosophical system. But after the execution of the King he resolved on a new activity in propaganda. In 1650 there appeared in English his HUMAN NATURE and DE CORPORE POLITICO, which briefly and cogently set forth all his main positions in ethics and politics ; and in 1651 there appeared, under the title of "Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society," his own translation of the DE CIVE into his masterly English.[1] Designed as another forerunner to his crowning work, LEVIATHAN, which appeared in the same year, the RUDIMENTS came out in duodecimo ; that in folio. His ethical philosophy was now fully propounded to the England that had seen its king executed, and was living under a Commonwealth, with the autocracy of Cromwell discernible on the horizon.

Nothing so straightforward and incisive had yet appeared in ethical literature as the RUDIMENTS and the LEVIATHAN, though the LEX REX of Rutherford (1644), one of the great apostles of

[1] A French translation by Sorbière, *Elémens philosophiques du Citoyen*, had appeared in 1649.

persecution, had been explicit enough in setting out the parliamentarian theory. Hobbes puts his ethical system in a nutshell in the Epistle Dedicatory of the RUDIMENTS, before he comes to the Preface to the Reader:—

> When I applied my thoughts to the investigation of natural justice I was presently advertised from the very word *justice* (which signifies a steady will of giving every one his *own*), that my first inquiry was to be, from whence it proceeded that any man should call anything rather his own than another man's. And when I found that this proceeded not from Nature, but consent (for what Nature at first laid forth in common, men did afterwards distribute into several impropriations), I was conducted from thence into another inquiry—namely, to what end, and upon what impulsives, when all was equally every man's in common, men did rather think it fitting that every man should have his enclosure. And I found that the reason was that from a community of goods there must needs arise contention whose enjoyment should be greatest, and from that contention all kinds of calamities must unavoidably ensue, which, by the instinct of Nature, every man is taught to shun. Having therefore thus arrived at two maxims of human nature, the one arising from the *concupiscible* part, which desires to appropriate to itself the use of those things in which all others have a joint interest, the other proceeding from the *rational*, which teaches every man to fly a contre-natural dissolution as the greatest mischief that can arise in Nature: Which principles being laid down, I seem from them to have demonstrated by a most evident connection, in this little work of mine, first the absolute necessity of Leagues and Contracts, and thence the rudiments both of moral and civil philosophy.

Here (the doctrine of absolute monarchy being so far withheld) we have the system in its strength, up to the point of the legal arrangement. Ethic is primarily the system of laws forced upon men in communities by their instinctive egoism, faced by the need of preserving the community as such. 'Nature' constitutes the egoistic impulse; but reason, which controls it, is also Nature. Hobbes had said it in so many words: "Reason is no less of the nature of man than passion"; and, following the Stoics, he had pronounced that "there can be no other Law of Nature than Reason."[1] Thus, whatever deference to theism may be at times shown in the system, it is radically and centrally naturalistic. The supernatural is treated as adventitious:—

> That appendage [appendix] which is added, concerning the

[1] *De corpore politico*, pt. i, ch. 2, § 1. Cp. Diog. Laertius, vii, i, § 87 (*Zeno*, 53).

> regiment [rule] of God, hath been done with this intent, that *the dictates of God Almighty in the Law of Nature might not seem repugnant* to the written law, revealed to us in his word.

And the weak side of the system is no less fully apparent in the Preface to the Reader, where we have a royalist declamation by way of a prelude to the philosophical plea that is to follow. The issue, developed shrewdly enough in both treatises, is: Given that morality must be a thing agreed on, if it is to operate socially, and that as regards our most essential relations we must put ourselves under a system of law; how are the laws to be made, and how far shall they interfere with individual liberty? For which problem Hobbes at this stage seeks to prepare his reader thus:—

> How many kings (and those good men too) have this one error, that a tyrant king might lawfully be put to death, been the slaughter of? How many throats has this false position cut, that a prince for some causes may by some certain men be deposed? And what bloodshed has not this erroneous doctrine caused, that kings are not superiors to but administrators for the multitude? Lastly, how many rebellions has this opinion been the cause of, which teaches that the knowledge whether the commands of kings be just or unjust belongs to private men, and that before they yield obedience they not only may but ought to dispute them?
>
> Besides, in the moral philosophy now commonly received, there are many things no less dangerous than those, which it matters not now to recite. I suppose those ancients foresaw this who rather chose to have the science of justice wrapt up in fables than openly exposed to disputations; for before such questions began to be moved princes did not sue for but already exercised the supreme power. They kept their empire entire, not by arguments, but by punishing the wicked and protecting the good; likewise subjects did not measure what was just by the sayings and judgments of private men, but by the laws of the realm; nor were they kept in peace by disputations, but by power and authority; yea, they reverenced the supreme power, whether residing in one man or in a council, as a certain visible divinity. Therefore they little used as in our days to join themselves with ambitions, and hellish spirits, to the utter ruin of their States, for they could not entertain so strange a fancy as not to desire the preservation of that by which they were preserved; in truth, the simplicity of those times was not capable of so learned a piece of folly. Wherefore it was peace and a golden age, which ended not before that, Saturn being expelled, it was taught lawful to take up arms against kings.

Already it is clear that there are two serious flaws in Hobbes's

system—a theoretical and a practical. Deducing a moral Law of Nature from men's social relations, and claiming that this law was yielded by Right Reason, he proposed to put the entire interpretation of the law in question in the hands of one sovereign person. Of what use was it to posit a reasoned Law of Nature if men were debarred from deducing it for themselves? If there could also be deduced by Right Reason from the Nature of Things an absolute necessity for a sovereign to maintain peace, who must accordingly do all the work of Right Reason for all in the matter of morals, why not simply put that as the real case? Reason was in fact too strong in Hobbes himself to let him act on his own theory. He instinctively hoped that by postulating a rational basis for all morality he could persuade men to trust to a system of one man sovereignty which theoretically *must* proceed on those so obviously rational principles. But the theory was plainly askew; and on the practical side it was no more satisfying.

The monarchic argument, as fully and carefully developed in the LEVIATHAN, consists in showing that there must be a sovereign authority *somewhere* in a Commonwealth; and that to make one man sovereign, with power to rule for the common good, and then to confront him with an Assembly which controls him, is to make two sovereigns. That is perfectly true, so far as it goes. The English monarchy, at that stage as long before and long afterwards, was a quite inconsistent system, reducible to no ethical or legal principle. It was in fact a stage between monarchy proper, in which the king both makes and maintains the laws, and a State in which the king is but the supreme or ceremonial functionary in the administration of the laws made by the people in representative assembly. This was of course recognized by the strict constitutionalists who maintained that Britain was a 'mixed monarchy,' and whom Hobbes regarded as chiefly to blame for the Civil War. They instinctively declined to admit that a working constitution must be logical. At that stage there *were* two sovereigns; that is to say, a constant struggle as to which was sovereign. To Hobbes's criticism there was no logical answer as from those who wanted to maintain the state of struggle. Clarendon, who answered him with a certain frigid vehemence, keenly resenting a kind of royalism which made royalism newly repulsive, felt bound to concede that "the sovereign is the only legislator," yet argued at the same time that the sovereign is bound by the laws to which he consents[1]—a

[1] *A Brief View and Survey of the Dangerous and Pernicious Errors to Church and State in Mr. Hobbes's Book entitled Leviathan*, ed. 1676, pp. 121–22.

mere evasion of the plain fact that without power to alter laws (as is done by all legislatures) there is no sovereignty. Clarendon in his own career exemplified the plight to which things political had come in the age of transition. The nation never knew where it was. It would not have an absolute king, above the law; and it would not do without a king: the Commonwealth promptly collapsed into a new autocracy for lack of acquired national capacity to subsist as a republic. And this incapacity so far proved Hobbes's case against a sovereign representative assembly.

But upon Hobbes's own theory, men in society seek a system of law in order to save themselves from evil; and unless he could prove that the only intolerable evil was that of anarchy he had not made out his case. The king of his system was a person formally capacitated to do evil to every one if he would; and to argue that the people had covenanted with the king to represent them as their sovereign, and must therefore submit to him, was to clash with Hobbes's own fundamental principle that no man could rightly divest himself of his right of self-preservation.[1] Even if, then, the people felt they could not do without a king, the fact that they had covenanted with him to rule them did not, upon Hobbes's principle, take away from them the right to revise their bargain when they found that the king plundered them.

On the other hand, the English king was just as illogical as the people. The maxim, *L'état c'est moi*, had indeed in effect been enunciated by Henri IV before Louis XIV; but the Kings of England professed to govern by the laws and to tax in general by means of Parliaments, whereas the king of Hobbes's theory should have abolished Parliaments, as Cromwell was soon to do. Hobbes, putting aside divine right in the current sense as a chimera, sought to give him a right of reason, which, however, in effect clashed with the first principle of reason that he recognized—the right of men to plan for self-preservation. By striving partially to combine the old sovereignty of One with the rationally desired sovereignty of All they had landed themselves in a frying-pan; and Hobbes's advice to them was in effect to get into the fire. Thus his theoretical inconsistency yielded a practical doctrine than which nothing could be more impracticable in the community for which he prescribed. His ideal political system demanded an ideal king; and no man in England, Royalist or Roundhead, believed Charles to be that, any more than James had been. Hobbes posited a king who *qua*

[1] *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. 14.

covenanted Representative Person ('personating' the State) could *ex hypothesi* do no wrong. His own doctrine avowed that men needed a king who would do them no harm; and to pretend this of any actual king was merely to argue for the king as Catholics did for the Pope—a line of argument which Hobbes himself derided. Thus he too was divided against himself, especially on the practical side.

His royalist declamation in the Preface to the RUDIMENTS follows close upon the complaint in the Epistle Dedicatory that among all the writers on moral philosophy "there is not one that hath used an idoneous principle of tractation"—that is, a satisfying principle of deduction. And this was true. But what is the 'tractation' to the conclusion that laws must or may be new-made by an absolute monarch—by James or Charles, for instance, led by Buckingham, or Laud, or Strafford? The mere demand that the king should be absolutely free to levy taxes as he chose was in excess even of the royalist ideal as realized at the Restoration, and was in effect a proposal to make an end of Parliament. But even apart from that dead wall of obstacle, the theorem was outside discussion. At the first start comes the challenge: Is the king to prescribe my religion? If so, how does he decide that? From the Bible? Does the Bible then say that the king—Saul, Herod, or Cæsar—is its interpreter? And if Hobbes answers that the king's power is needed to fix a standard of public religion for order's sake, to prevent perpetual fighting, and that he should leave the rest to conscience, the next question is: When King Charles changes King James's standard, one archbishop being an Arminian where the other had been a Calvinist, what becomes of the preliminary position as to the fixity of contracts?

Hobbes, of course, had anticipated the religious challenge, and already in the DE CORPORE POLITICO[1] he had carefully argued (1) that there is only one doctrine really essential to Christian faith, namely the belief that Christ is the Messiah and Saviour; (2) that the civic power can meddle with men's religion only by way of restraining certain actions or utterances, which restraint leaves conscience untouched; and (3) that many texts in the New Testament command Christians to obey the civil power, whatsoever it be. From an orthodox point of view the case is really strong; and the Quakers soon tacitly admitted it by practising non-resistance, short of the holding of their forbidden conventicles. But no 'tractation'

[1] Pt. ii, ch. 6.

from the Christian law of obedience to the civil power could be rationally expected to avail with men who knew that they were ruled in matters of religious observance by a series of ecclesiastics, each of whom in turn put his own interpretation on the sacred books, and bullied people to church and sacrament in his own fashion, one punishing what his predecessor or successor prescribed.

No one knew better than Hobbes that it was in this way that things happened. In the LEVIATHAN[1] he puts it in so many words: "I may attribute all the changes of religion in the world to one and the same cause; and that is unpleasing priests; and those not only among Catholics, but even in that Church that hath presumed most of reformation." Just before, too, he has avowed that the enjoining of beliefs in contradictories takes away the reputation of wisdom; that inconformity to the code laid down by himself takes away from the propounder the reputation of sincerity; and that the propounding of religious decrees which are plainly to the propounder's separate interest invalidates his authority. But all this was just what happened when the king ruled through his priests and his favourites. If, again, the king should decide to enslave any number of his subjects, albeit this was declared by Hobbes himself to be against the Law of Nature, the theory demanded that the king should be submitted to, because the king is the necessary supreme authority. If, yet again, the king should turn Catholic and proceed to burn such of his subjects as do not agree to his interpretation of the Bible, wherein is the state of peace better than the state of war?

It is the oddest of spectacles: the royalist proclaiming, without hindrance from the Commonwealth (whose authorities either paid no heed to him or let him alone, knowing that the mass of the people would pay none), the superior efficacy of the monarchic system to any other, telling them that they ought to obey an infidel king, and hoping thus to gain the assent of the non-Puritan multitude, whose clergy at the same time he was infuriating by the flagrant rationalism of his whole way of thought. The book, indeed, might have theoretically supported the position of Cromwell as Lord Protector a few years later; and some thought that Hobbes had some such forecast; but there too he would have been out of relation to the actual. Reading the history of the previous thirty years, one feels chronically in presence of a kind of insanity, the strife and clamour of men possessed by hallucinations and obsessed by fantastic dogmas, fighting over the positions of church furniture,

[1] Pt. i, ch. 12, end.

agonizing about ceremonies and symbols, gestures and vestures, sitting and kneeling postures, and all the rest of what passed for things 'spiritual.' Coming into the imbroglio with his philosophy of absolute obedience to one man's will, not as a matter of 'divine right' but as one of logical necessity, of 'tractation' from the need for a code of law, Hobbes dramatically reminds us that no man can escape the temperature of his time. He has his own fantasticality, his own hypnotized absorption in his *eidolon*. And he is specially a warning for us to-day in respect of his confident assurance to his patron that "were the nature of human actions as distinctly known as the nature of quantity in geometrical figures, the strength of avarice and ambition, which is sustained by the erroneous opinions of the vulgar as touching the nature of right and wrong, would presently faint and languish, and mankind enjoy such an immortality of peace that (unless it were for habitation, on supposition that the earth should grow too narrow for her inhabitants) there would hardly be left any pretence for war." The implication being that he had made clear the nature of human actions, the forecast is particularly memorable as coming from a philosopher who posits as a fundamental fact men's universal distrust of each other.

> Hobbes's preoccupation with the political problem may be said to have affected his whole philosophy to some extent for the worse, causing him to leave even his psychology incoherent. He is far from being consistent in his materialism. At the outset of LEVIATHAN he writes that there is "no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense." Later, discussing "the virtues commonly called intellectual," he writes: "These virtues are of two sorts, natural and acquired. By natural I mean not that which a man hath from his birth; for that is nothing else but sense, wherein men differ so little from one another, and from brute beasts, as it is not to be reckoned among virtues."[1] Thus no real distinction is drawn between natural and acquired virtues, the latter being identified with "acquired wit, I mean acquired by method and instruction," which is "none but reason." If there are no innate differences between men in respect of structural bias to appetite or passion or judgment, there are no natural virtues as distinguished from acquired. As so often happens, the desire to magnify reason made Hobbes ignore the great differences in men's rational capacity—a fact particularly important to his ethical system, as regarded his doctrine of the determination of the will

Yet, with all his inconsistencies, Hobbes rendered to ethics the

[1] Pt. i, ch. 8.

cardinal service of forcing debate, once for all, straight to the heart of the problem. After the LEVIATHAN, all ethical discussion, broadly speaking, involved the recognition of a need for a basis in human principle, not in alleged divine revelation, interior or exterior. As the world that vilified Machiavelli pored on his precepts and did but seek to improve on them, so the world that abused Hobbes for his recourse to human circumstances as the determinants of morality was fain to justify him by merely drawing partially different conclusions from the same position. For all competent readers morality was thenceforth homocentric. It is true that he carefully professed to square his doctrine with Scripture: had he not done so he could in that age have had no hearing at all. The frontispiece of the RUDIMENTS represents crowned Dominion and lay Liberty standing at the sides of an altar upon which is seated the aureoled figure of Religion holding the Christian cross—a design signally different from that of LEVIATHAN, where the colossal emblematic figure holding sword and sceptre and dominating all the other symbols seems to be that of Cromwell![1] But in LEVIATHAN also the Scriptural apparatus is abundant. The essential thing is that in every one of the four treatises of which LEVIATHAN is the masterpiece the whole validity of revelation is implied to lie in its conformity with reason. In his first political treatise, quashing in advance his plea for absolute kingship, he writes: "Among the Laws of Nature customs and prescription are not numbered. For whatsoever action is against reason, though it be reiterated never so often, or that there be ever so many precedents thereof, is still against reason, and therefore not a Law of Nature, but contrary to it."[2] And on the same page: "For as much as law (to speak properly) is a command, and these dictates, as they proceed from Nature, are not commands, they are not therefore called laws in respect of Nature, but in respect of the Author of Nature, God Almighty."[3] In other words, whatsoever reason deduces from a study of men's social circumstances as a necessary restriction upon

[1] This is noted by Whewell, who, however, mentions (*Lectures*, p. 47) that in the copy of *Leviathan* in the library of Trinity College there is a different and inferior engraving in which the head appears to be intended for Charles I. That Hobbes was prepared in 1651 to submit to a Cromwellian despotism seems not inconceivable, though Clarendon's story of his having avowed "a mind to go home," implying such a disposition, is not very good evidence. See Prof. G. C. Robertson's *Hobbes*, pp. 68-73. If Hobbes had not got back to England by making his peace with the Council of State; he would have been prosecuted in France for his open attack on the Papacy in *Leviathan*. And the fact remains that in the *Rudiments*, published in the same year as the *Leviathan*, Charles is pictured on the frontispiece to the section on Religion as walking martyr-like among wild beasts, gins, and snares, with eight well-known lines of Horace (*Integer vitæ, scelerisque purus*, etc.) underneath.

[2] *De corpore politico*, pt. i, ch. iv, § 11.

[3] *Id.* § 12.

men's liberty and a necessary prescription of reciprocal action is divine law.

Hobbes always writes with a rare concision, and nearly always with a fine clearness; but in LEVIATHAN he puts forth all his power alike of phrase and of ratiocination to establish his positions. Here, though there is a close-knit argument for the untenable position of absolute kingship, there is no royalist declamation. As in the two treatises of 1640, published in 1650, he is content to be coolly scientific. In the short epistle dedicatory he merely observes that, "in a way beset with those that contend, on one side, for too great Liberty, and on the other side for too much Authority" [another inconsistency, if he referred to kingship] "'tis hard to pass between the points of both unwounded. But yet, methinks, the endeavour to advance the Civil Power should not be by the Civil Power condemned." And still, with the courage which underlay all his fear of strife, he explains that he has given an unusual interpretation to certain texts, "for they are the outworks of the enemy, from whence they impugn the Civil Power." He was prepared to accept Cromwell, but not any sanhedrim of fanatics. As neither Churchmen nor sectaries would admit that the civil power could be supreme over things of religion, he is thus in effect repelling all political claims founded on religion, while professing to do so by Scriptural texts. The value of his appeal to that test is to be gathered from the remark in his treatise that "in these four things—opinion of ghosts, ignorance of second causes, devotion towards what men fear, and taking of things casual for prognostics—consisteth the natural seed of religion."[1] The subsequent acceptance of 'supernatural revelation' is but an 'appendage.'

When it comes to the human basis, Hobbes quite definitely grounds his 'tractation' upon self-regard. Where the Stoics had made self-preservation their starting-point[2] without making it a principle, he made it both. His conception of a Law of Nature is "a precept or general rule, *found out by reason*, by which a man is *forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life*."[3] Therefore, seeing that universal, unrestrained self-assertion means the state of universal war, it behoves every rational man, in his own interest, to seek peace. Formally, Hobbes chooses to put as the first and fundamental Law of Nature the command to seek peace, and the second: "By all means we can, to defend ourselves." Really, his argument puts the latter first, and fitly so, for there is no prior

[1] *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. 12; cp. ch. 5. [2] Diogenes Laërtius, vii, i, § 85 (*Zeno*, 52).
[3] *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. 14.

principle in the human animal. As he says, a little further on, the right of self-preservation is "the only end of laying down any right." We seek our own safety by the first Law of Nature: the seeking of social peace is a rationally planned means to that end. Upon that the whole 'tractation' rests.

The ethic of Hobbes, as apart from his final political application of it, is thus one of pure rationalism, with its standard in social utility. The general duty of fulfilling contracts is simply the statement of the obligation undertaken; and this constitutes Justice, "the third Law of Nature"; and it is as the fulfilment of a contract that he describes the submission to the sovereign for which he contends. Men agree to accept a sovereign, and their posterity acquiesce; then they are bound to hold to the bargain. The king is in theory and in fact their representative: he is the 'Person' (Lat. *persona*) or personator of the State; and the laws he makes are thus all the time *their* laws, they being personated in him. The obvious answer here is that the actual history of kingship is a grotesquely different thing from the abstract theory; and that to put upon each new adult citizen the alternative of either rebelling at once, to make a new king, or submitting at once and forever unconditionally to whatever the existing king may do, is to flout that very need for a rational political solution to which the philosopher professes to be ministering.[1] He is really proposing a contract of perpetual posterities—a thing fantastically irreconcilable with the conception of contract from which he starts. As we have seen, the idea comes from Hooker.

But while he thus, for peace' sake, enthrones one fallible will in the fictitious character of Representative Person, Hobbes produces a very conscientious and well-reasoned code of sequent ethics for the guidance of that Person. At the outset, subsuming an ethical bias, but still grounding it on personal utility, he makes a stand for justice, which, he calmly points out, is not contrary to reason, though "the fool hath said in his heart, there is no such thing as justice; and sometimes also with his tongue." The argument should have been completed at this stage, however, by facing the fact—avowed a little later—that some men's reason does not recognize the superior rationality of reciprocity; and that *that* is a further ground for a coercive system of law. But Hobbes does very carefully contend that there is required by the Law of Nature, deducible by reason, not only (3) justice; but (4) gratitude for "grace";

[1] This point was put, by anticipation, before Hobbes, by Grotius, and after him by Pufendorf. It is flouted by Berkeley in his *Discourse of Passive Obedience*, § 51.

(5) "mutual accommodation or complaisance"; (6) "facility to pardon"; (7) the restriction of revenge by having regard, not to "the greatness of the evil past [passed] but the greatness of the good to follow"; (8) the avoidance of all contumely; (9) "that every man acknowledge other for his equal by Nature"; (10) "that at the entrance into conditions of peace, no man require to reserve to himself any right which he is not content should be reserved to every one of the rest"; (11) strict equity on the part of judges; (12) "equal use of things common"; (13) that what can neither be divided nor enjoyed in common shall go by lot—an obscure precept, explained by (14), which prescribes primogeniture; (15) "that men that mediate peace be allowed safe conduct"; (16) submission to arbitrament where the law is not precise, or the judge cannot readily ascertain the facts; (17) no man to be his own judge; (18) that no interested party shall be arbitrator; (19) that a judge shall follow the balance of testimony. "These are the Laws of Nature, dictating peace, for a means of the conservation of men in multitudes; and which only [*i.e.*, alone] concern the doctrine of Civil Society."[1]

Thus no one can honestly pretend that Hobbes, in grounding ethics upon self-regard, gives any license to egoism.[2] From the first he had repudiated Aristotle's doctrine of natural inequality, with its ethical endorsement of slavery.[3] If the Golden Rule be good ethic, this must be, for it is the reasoned analysis of reciprocity, taken as the reasoned consequence of self-regard—a stronger ground, surely, than any mere precept put categorically. The absence of any specification of a duty of beneficence, or active kindness to the suffering, is no more a necessary blank in the system than it was a blank in Hobbes's character;[4] for the duty of succouring distress easily comes under the head of a rational social act, conducive to a man's own safety when he may be in straits. In the DE CORPORE POLITICO he had said[5] that "the sum of virtue is to be sociable with them that will be sociable, and formidable to them that will not." But there too he had concluded that "equity, justice, and

[1] *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. 15.

[2] Lowell's gross fling (in his essay on Pope) at "Hobbes's unwieldy Leviathan, left stranded on the shore of the last age, and nauseous with the stench of its selfishness," is one of his few indecently bad criticisms. There is too much evidence that the critic frequently aspersed a book or author before study; and this is probably an instance. Had he read the *Leviathan* with any attention, he would probably have passed a very different judgment. In any case he could not have forborne praise of the style.

[3] *De corpore politico*, pt. i, ch. iv, § 1.

[4] In *Behemoth*, incidentally, he speaks of the "king's laws, which also are God's laws, to be in charity with all men, to cherish the poor and sick, and to live soberly and free from scandal." (Ed. 1682, p. 95.)

[5] Pt. i, ch. iv, § 15.

honour contain all virtues whatsoever." Probably Hobbes had in mind at that time the evil of indiscriminate charity. In any case he was specially concerned to demonstrate to an intensely quarrelsome Christian community that the light of reason could guide them to a polity of peace.

The weak point of the system as presenting a psychology of ethics is, of course, the apparent assumption that all right-doing is dictated by self-regard. It came of his line of approach—the rationale of law, as a provision against the anti-social impulses; and this was dictated alike by his temperament and his life experience. Had he been challenged to admit that benevolent impulses may be as spontaneous as self-regard, and are in that sense disinterested, he need not for his system's sake have disputed it; though he could rightly have answered (1) that benevolent instinct may operate arbitrarily, deflecting justice, and singling out some to the neglect of others; and (2) that the deduction of the moral laws from the principle of self-preservation is therefore none the less necessary. If, indeed, he could have seen past the political emergency which preoccupied him, he might have put his whole ethical system on a broad and sound foundation by substituting *self-realization* for *self-preservation*, from which higher standpoint the social instinct would be perceived as no less spontaneous than the self-preserving, and the impulse of pity, which Hobbes crudely assigned to fear of future mishap for oneself,[1] would be recognized as part of the basis of morality. Missing these larger truths, he did not even succeed in his prescription for the political emergency. He simply ignored one set of facts of experience in reacting to and arguing from another.

That he should thus have failed, with all his sagacity and long study, to grasp the scope of the political problem is indeed intelligible enough when we review, as has been done above, the European situation in general and that of England in particular. There was small sign anywhere of any way out of the whirlpool of strife set up by the new force of ignorant popular fanaticism on the one hand and the absolutist fanaticism alike of Romanism and Protestantism on the other. Democracy in England had revealed itself, to use Hobbes's phrase, as "an aristocracy of orators,"[2] in which each leader in turn proved himself false to his own profession of loyalty to liberty. The military dictator, governing by major-generals, was in the end much more tolerant of opinion than had been the

[1] *Human Nature*, ch. ix, § 10; *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. 6 (Camb. ed. p. 53).
[2] *De corpore politico*, pt. ii, ch. ii, § 5.

parliament he suppressed. And when we dismiss Hobbes's prescription of absolute monarchy as proved by all subsequent experience no less than by that of his own day to be a vain antidote, let us not hastily suppose that we have yet found a complete ethical solution of the problem, any more than we have exorcized the spirits of lawlessness and blind self-confidence, the peril of egoistic and ignorant incompetence to master the ever more complex political tasks of mankind. A timorous man, untried in action, is indeed not likely to find the right or feasible political solution for a turbulent people, determined to preserve its ill-understood liberties. The experience of the thirty-seven years that followed the issue of LEVIATHAN, an age in which Hobbes's prescription finally came near being put in practice, certainly did not recommend it to posterity. But in our day we ought not to forget that it was his concern for peace on earth that impelled him through all his work. *Redivivus*, he might challenge us to say whether that cause had signally prospered in a world that has refused his cure.

Considering how he clashed on one side with the established Church, and on the other with the bibliolatrous sectaries, we must in justice pronounce the influence of Hobbes the more remarkable, and ascribe the more merit to his literary and ratiocinative gift. He preached passive obedience, now and for generations the standing political doctrine of the Church, thus repelling all that was freedom-loving in England; yet the clergy on their part detested him for his unconcealed contempt of their credulities and his solemnly disguised disbelief in their creed. It was the massive power of his great treatise that forced upon all thinking men the radical reconsideration of their 'moral philosophy.' Nothing so sequent, so knit, so rigorously reasoned, had yet appeared in English; and no style was ever better framed than his for the creation of the scientific temper. That he himself, nevertheless, from time to time loses the scientific attitude is only too clear: his final attacks on Aristotle, for instance,[1] represent the mood of the sectaries of the anti-Aristotelian reaction rather than that of a judicial thinker. But the great bulk of his work is stringently reasoned, whether the reasoning be right or wrong. It was he, too, who first gave scientific form to the concept of determinism, thus far turned to mere obscurantism by theology, with the result of creating a new cause of civil war in Protestant lands.

[1] *Leviathan*, pt. iii, ch. 46.

§ 4. *The Free-Will Controversy.*

It is true that Hobbes, challenged instantly by religion in the person of Bishop Bramhall, posited theological determinism alongside of the naturalistic, and, by way of countering the (Arminian) theological charge of making God punish men for doing what he had willed, firmly took up the position of Duns Scotus and William of Occam, that "the power of God alone without any other helps is sufficient justification of any action he doth.....That which he does is made just by his doing it; just, I say, in him, though not always just in us.....God cannot sin, because his doing a thing makes it just, and consequently no sin."[1] For this he cited in support, unanswerably, Romans ix, 11–18, the great stumbling-block of the Arminians. But for Hobbes this was only so much compulsory fence—the real problem was scientific; and his answer to Bramhall is an excellent sample of his dialectic at its best. In his political treatises he had not explicitly raised the question of 'freedom' at all, merely putting the pregnant proposition that "will is the last appetite in deliberation."[2] But Bramhall had had talk with him, and scented deeper heresy (from the new Arminian and the Catholic standpoints) than lay on the surface of the writing.

Bramhall, who was trained to scholastic fence but not to accurate thinking, alternately made the usual confusion between freedom of will and freedom of action, and compromised his own position by pronouncing that all the actions of animals and *some* of the actions of men are 'necessitated.' It was not that he saw the logical fallacy of describing acts of will as *either all* 'free' or *all* 'unfree'—a description which makes the term non-significant, since a 'free' act of will could be so distinguished only as contrasted with an unfree act of will, if 'free-will' were to mean anything truly thinkable. He was simply following his 'feeling,' after the manner of those who since his day have argued that 'we *feel* we are free, and there an end.' Theologians in Bramhall's day were still too ratiocinative to fall back on that simple formula, accustomed as they were to insist upon belief of incomprehensible mysteries. Bramhall, in fact, does not scruple to parry Hobbes's argument from God's decrees by the answer that these decrees constitute an obscure question—in effect committing himself to a denial that they are to be asserted.[3] Hobbes, in turn, might have shortened the

[1] *Of Liberty and Necessity*, in *Hobbes's Tripos*, ed. 1684, pp. 283–85.
[2] *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. 6.
[3] *A Letter about Liberty and Necessity*, ed. 1677, p. 66.

dispute for himself and others by pointing out squarely, as Locke did later, that the terms 'freedom' and 'liberty' have no application to the determinist proposition, which simply is that, whereas will may be described as the cause of an action, will cannot be said to be caused *by* will. That is the *pons asinorum* of the debate. The ordinary free-willist always identifies two disparate conceptions. He is really arguing that we are free to *do* what is right (barring, of course, external compulsion). But nobody disputes *that.* The problem is, how comes one man to will or desire the good, and another to will or desire what, by the test of his own attitude when injured, he knows to be 'evil.'

Hobbes gave the philosophic answer in terms of general naturalism: "That which I say necessitateth and determinateth every action is the *sum of all things, which, being now existent, conduce and concur to the production of that action hereafter, whereof if any one thing now were wanting, the effect could not be produced.*"[1] Even here he puts the 'appendage' that: "This concourse of causes, whereof everyone is *determined* to be such as it is by a like concourse of *former* causes, may well be called (in respect they were all set and ordered by the eternal cause of all things, God Almighty) the decree of God." He was here well fenced against the bishop. Had he properly developed his psychology, he would—or might, unless he thought the proposition too dangerous—have added that in respect of human actions the causation is proximately determined by (1) the congenital structure of the individual, which varies infinitely; (2) the training he has received; and (3) the varying stress of the immediate circumstances—temptation, provocation, fear of punishment, etc. But Hobbes does put quite clearly the answers both to those who say it is unjust to blame or punish the wrong-doer if his will is caused, and those who say that determinism leaves no room for ethics. The answers here are as old as Stoicism. What has obscured alike the logical and the moral problem is the presupposition of the Christian that sin ought to be punished *as* sin, without regard to any human consequences.

The ingenuous champion of free-will may get out of his dilemma by starting with the animal. He can probably consent to see that the tiger's will is determined by its structure and circumstances. Nevertheless he sees no injustice in killing the tiger rather than let the tiger kill him, or in caging the tiger if that be to him preferable and practicable. He will at this point probably say, however, that

[1] *Tripos*, as cited, p. 280.

he does not 'blame' the tiger, whereas he 'blames' the evil-doing man. But let him next say whether, if by 'correction' he could control the tiger's will as he may that of a horse or dog, he would not do so. And let him then explain why it is that he is not content so to correct or to cage the wrong-doing man *if he could*. Only his theological presupposition can prevent his seeing that this course, which *would* be 'punishment,' is the only rational one. That is to say, any further causation of suffering (as distinct from simple killing of the criminal, which may be done humanely, and may be so justified when the criminal is dangerous) is simply a taking of *revenge*, which his own ethic commonly condemns. All the polemic about the injustice of praise and blame now disappears. Praise is the spontaneous expression of satisfaction, whether in beauty, or pleasantness, or skill, or nobleness of persons, prospects, flowers, buildings, animals, actions, utterances, music, pictures, or ideas. No free-willer has ever argued that it is either unjust or foolish to praise a statue or a star. Why, then, should he demur to praising a caused action or a finely-constituted character, equally caused?

Blame is on the same footing. Many men are no less vehement (some much more so) in condemning (blaming) an ugly thing than in blaming a bad action. In both cases alike the rational test is one of sanity and utility, of rational sense of proportion and consequence. To blame a bad picture can mean an influence upon the painter (or other painters) or upon the judgment of other spectators, or it may not. And in the case of the wrong-doer blame is precisely the primordial and perpetual mode of influencing. It is one of the factors in the causation of one will by other wills, and is but an extreme form of instruction. The very word 'correction,' so often used by deniers of determinism, is the admission of this. No determinist ever said that the actions of all or even most wrong-doers (that is, most people) are determined solely by internal antecedents as distinguished from external moral influence. Praise and blame are for the determinist parts of the process of moral causation, affecting wills. Where a bad will is practically quite insusceptible to praise and blame, the blame goes on as before, *qua* judgment, but is, in the terms of the case, ineffective upon the bad will, though it may be still effective upon others. For the rest, if the bad will operates criminally, it is to be dealt with in the interest of the protection of society; if not criminally, there is no remedy (save possibly by fresh legislation), though criticism will persist.

And now we have the full statement of the 'law of nature'

understood as = 'law of reason.' We who praise and blame are determined in our course there, just as when we are praised or blamed. We are all alike, in all things, under causation, and the reference to reason takes place equally by causation. Our rational life *consists in* seeking to be reasonable—that is, to do our best to understand, to plan, to adapt. If it be here rejoined that, on this statement, our reasoning is itself determined, and that thus the doctrine of determinism makes no difference to life, the answer is this : a difference is always made by a new conception of the nature of things ; and, while the determinist will still praise and blame, because, as a reasoning and sentient being, he must, he differs greatly, on the one hand, from the unreflecting intuitionist who merely seeks revenge because revenge is sweet, and, on the other hand, from the theologian, Christian or other, who dogmatically perverts the problem by positing an avenging God who punishes men for being what he made them. Both of those attitudes mean cruelty, which, to the rational spirit, is itself a manifestation of evil, a causing of suffering without any other 'benefit' to mankind than the demoralizing pleasure of those who inflict or rejoice in cruelty. If the intuitionist or the theologian cannot see the matter thus, that is for the rational moralist just one of the manifestations of evil which he cannot cure.

In a word, determinism (the best and most scientific term that the case admits of, since both 'compulsion' and 'necessity' are much coloured by physical connotations) is but the recognition that causation holds in the moral as in the physical world. The recognition, *ex definitione*, in no way affects the determinateness of actions. The statement that 'we feel we are free' is neither here nor there. It is, in strict truth, a bad terminological exactitude. The meaning of 'free' is properly to be settled by its original and natural use, which applies to actions. To import it into the process of judgment is a verbal solecism on a par with the application to sounds of terms of colour—an application to some extent permitted by literary usage, but always with the recognition of metaphor. But those who argue for free-will commit the misapplication in dead earnest. They never speak of 'free hunger,' 'free pain,' 'free pleasure,' or 'free admiration' ('free love' has a quite different force, and is *meant* to apply not to will but to action). But they continue to speak of 'free-will' without regard to their practice in the other cases. They can recognize that admiration is caused, and that, though taste may be altered by experience and instruction, no man can be enabled to enjoy what he dislikes. Unfortunately the

continued acceptance of the term free-will[1] by highly competent reasoners who perceive and reject the fallacy of those who 'swear by the word' tends to keep the latter in countenance; and the verbal confusion will continue to elicit and fix the mental confusion so long as it is not systematically exposed.

The final answer, then, to the formula 'we feel that we are free' is: Yes, we feel that we are free to *act as we think best.* But we do not and cannot feel that we are *free to think anything best.* 'Free' there becomes a meaningless term. If the worshipper of the word should still protest that he is conscious of no constraint, let him say (1) whether he is free to think that sugar tastes salt, and (2) whether he is psychically conscious either of the law of gravitation or of 'freedom' from its operation. He may then perhaps begin to realize that the men who have taught the doctrine of determinism are not morally different from himself, save in so far as they may be more averse from cruelty. If the ethical teaching of Hobbes has broadly availed for anything, it has been for that—for scrupulosity in conduct, for toleration; not for license to egoism, not even for passive obedience, which flourished, broadly speaking, only among men who reviled his entire philosophy as atheistic, after all his pains to show that theistic and naturalistic ethic logically come to the same thing.

There is even in Hobbes a remarkably explicit though undeveloped obtrusion of an intuitionist view of ethics: "That which giveth to human actions the relish of justice is a certain nobleness or gallantness of courage (*rarely found*) by which a man scorns to be beholding for the contentment of his life to fraud or breach of promise. This justice of the manners is what is meant where justice is called a virtue, and injustice a vice."[2] It could have admitted of development if the debate roused by his writings had been scientific rather than religious. But it was his philosophical fate to be caught in the maelstrom of the political problem of his age, and to turn all his ethical thinking to the end of settling abstractly an issue that could never be so settled in fact.

[1] It may perhaps be retorted that the term 'freethought' comes under the same disqualification. It certainly would if it involved at any point negation or ignoring of causation. But 'freethought' is simply a term of convenience to express rejection of *proposed restraints* on the process of judgment by appeal to 'revealed' or other 'authority.' That is to say, the term suggests to the will a motive to *act.* By authoritarian influences men can actually be induced *not* to 'think freely' on lines upon which they might otherwise so think. 'Think freely' is here equivalent to 'act freely.' But the use of the term always presupposes loyalty to rational tests of belief. Further, it differs absolutely from the use of 'free-will' in that it expressly distinguishes between a free and an unfree *use* of judgment, taking both kinds as actually occurring; whereas the free-will thesis meaninglessly applies the concept 'free' to *all* decisions or preferences—that is, to every operation of the mind.

[2] *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. 15.

In the essay on Hobbes by the late Mr. W. G. Pogson Smith, posthumously prefixed to the Oxford edition of *Leviathan*, a very high estimate of Hobbes's literary power and critical penetration is accompanied by violent denunciation of his ethic and his character. The critic cites for condemnation two passages, of which it may suffice to quote the first, as being much the more to his purpose:—

"The law is all the right reason we have, and (though he [Bishop Bramhall], as often as it disagreeth with his own reason, deny it) is the infallible rule of moral goodness. The reason whereof is this: that because neither mine nor the Bishop's reason is right reason fit to be a rule of our moral actions, we have therefore set up over ourselves a sovereign governor, and agreed that his laws shall be unto us, whatsoever they be, in the place of right reason, to dictate to us what is really good. In the same manner, as men in playing turn up trump, and as in playing their game their morality consisteth in not renouncing [= revoking], so in our civil conversation our morality is all contained in not disobeying the laws."[1] "It is idle," comments the essayist, "to qualify or defend such a political philosophy. It is rotten at the core";[2] and he later speaks of his "necessarily harsh review." It was not necessary thus to sum up wrongly; and the judgment savours of the subsequent account of Bacon as "that solemn humbug, that bourgeois Machiavel"—a mode of criticism which seems to find much favour with recent English academics. "Rotten at the core" is just what Hobbes's ethic is not; its unsound part is its practical application. That men in society must have a compulsory law, and that if every man claims every day to substitute for it his own 'right reason,' defying the law, there results anarchy, is common ground, by the admission alike of Bramhall and Mr. Smith. But a law may really seem to a conscientious man unjust. That is the dilemma, which Hobbes perfectly recognized. Before the passage above quoted from him there comes this:—

"The right reason which is the law is no otherwise *certainly* right than by our making it so by our approbation of it, and voluntary subjection to it. *For the law-makers are men and may err, and think that law which they make is for the good of the people sometimes when it is not. And yet the actions of subjects, if they conform to the laws, are morally good, and yet cease not to be naturally good.*"

The critic had perhaps not clearly seen the issue, which is: Are we absolutely and always to obey the law, or not? The Bramhalls would insist on obedience to the laws of which they

[1] *The Questions.....debated between Dr. Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, and Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, 1656, p. 147. Molesworth's ed. of Hobbes's Works, v, 194.
[2] Essay cited, in Oxford ed. of *Leviathan*, 1909, p. xvii.

approved; reserving the right to disobey where they disapproved. Hobbes prescribed passive obedience as the only way to peace; and argued that all the community, by acquiescing in the sovereignty for their own protection, owed it that obedience. Here, we have seen, he clashed with his own first principle, where he ought to have admitted frankly that there can be no absolute concurrence of all men in all disputable laws; that laws must be in a state of chronic revision; and that forbearance is incumbent alike on rulers and ruled. But this does not amount to saying that his philosophy is rotten at the core. He obviously erred further in saying in this passage that the law was commensurate with morality; that "the law is all the right reason we have"; that "in our civil conversation our morality is all contained in not disobeying the laws"—unless he was consciously using 'morality' in a very narrow definition. His own books, as we have seen, laid down as derived from the law of Nature a number of mutual obligations of which the law takes no account; and his principle of deduction involved the recognition of many more. But that was an oversight of controversy, not a central defect in his system.

There is no validity, then, in the critic's further summing-up, that "the justice of which LEVIATHAN is begotten is carefully emptied of all ethical content." This is only another extravagance. Even the prescription of passive obedience is ethically grounded by Hobbes on social utility: it is "for the conservation of men in multitudes." It is, further, identical in practice with the many explicit precepts of passive obedience in the New Testament with which Hobbes forensically buttressed his case; and which the Christian critic (who speaks of Spinoza as "perverse enough to bind the spirit of Christ in the fetters of Euclid") ought in consistency to have conjoined with that of Hobbes in this condemnation. The 'ethical content' of LEVIATHAN includes a demonstration that the Golden Rule is something more than a supernatural precept to be blindly obeyed, and may in all directions be shown to make for peace and goodwill.

When, over and above these aspersions, the critic pronounces[1] that "Hobbes was a philosopher who had no faith in truth," and exclaims[2]: "Seekers after truth—how Hobbes despised them, all that deluded race who dreamt of a law whose seat is the bosom of God!—" we can surmise the 'ethical content' of the critic's own creed. Here, for the instruction of university students, there is laid down the doctrine that any religious fanatic, applying no better test than his sense of illumination, may be termed a seeker for truth, while Hobbes, seeking for truth by reason, is not. The formula put as representing his

[1] *Id.* p. x. [2] P. xii.

attitude, "truth is not to be *sought* but *made*," is particularly hardy. It is precisely the mystic who makes his truth.

It might, indeed, be truly charged against Hobbes that in his attitude to theism and Bibliolatry he 'accommodated' himself to the bigotry of his age; and, further, that in his reasoning he was imperfectly on the alert against his main bias. But when there can be found two eminent philosophers who have not so sinned, it will be time enough to consider the question of excommunicating Hobbes on that score. His degree of scrupulosity in truth-seeking compares somewhat favourably with that of his critic, who seems to have been concerned to retaliate on Hobbes for his stringent criticisms of the English universities of his day as nurseries of obscurantism, doing the opposite work to that which they ought to do.[1] Even Mr. Smith's just praise of Hobbes's style is partly vitiated by the declaration[2]: "I am adopting no superficial test when I boldly affirm that every great thinker reveals his greatness by his style." This will not hold of Aristotle, or Spinoza, or Hume, or Kant, or Hegel. The next step in sophism is to deny good style to Bacon, and, by inference, to Cicero and Bolingbroke.

If, however, it should be suspected that academically hereditary hostility to Hobbes inspires the Oxford critic, the surmise is barred when we note that at Cambridge injustice was done to Hobbes by so temperate a critic as the late Professor Sidgwick, who, after avowing[3] that "Hobbes yields to no one in maintaining the paramount importance of moral regulations," writes[4] that in his system "the only fixed positions were selfishness everywhere and unlimited power somewhere." The two propositions are hardly compatible. When, further, Sidgwick says of Hobbes's system that "Its theoretical basis is that it is natural, and so reasonable, for each individual to *aim solely* at his own preservation or pleasure," he probably misleads some readers by the use of the words italicized. Hobbes teaches that men must practise gratitude, justice, complaisance, equality, and forgiveness of injuries as part of the means of self-preservation in the widest sense. If this is to "*aim solely*" at one's own interests, the same charge lies against every system which affirms that reciprocal beneficence or 'virtue' brings happiness. Sidgwick himself incurs his own criticism in his METHODS OF ETHICS.

Somewhat more surprising is the same competent critic's note on Hobbes's use of the maxim "Do not that to another which thou wouldest not have done to thyself,"[5] as the simple summary of all the moral vetoes of the law of Nature, which he declares to be always binding, but "then only when there is

[1] *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. 2.
[2] Essay cited, p. xxi.
[3] *History of Ethics*, p. 166.
[4] *Id.* p. 169.
[5] *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. 15. Cp. ch. 17: "*doing* to others as we would be *done to*." The 'negative' form had been previously put before in the *De corpore politico*, pt. i, ch. iv, § 9.

security"—that is, not in the 'state of war.' "It is clear," says the Professor,[1] "that Hobbes does not distinguish this formula from the well-known 'golden rule' of the gospel; whereas the formula above quoted is, *of course*, the golden rule taken only in its negative application, as prescribing abstinences, not positive services. It is perhaps even more remarkable that Puffendorf, quoting Hobbes, should not have observed the difference between the two formulæ.—Cf. *De Jure Naturæ et Gentium*, II, ch. iii, § 13." The really remarkable thing is that Sidgwick should thus have echoed a conventional proposition which is a bad fallacy. "Do not" is not a prescription of abstinence *from services*, as he implies. "*Do not* leave the wounded man lying untended in the roadway, because you would regard those as inhuman who so left you if you had so fared," is the equivalent of "Help the wounded man." "*Do not refuse* food and drink to the hungry" is identical with "Give food and drink to the hungry." The "do not" obviously prescribes abstinence from *disservices;* and to withhold succour from the wounded and distressed is a disservice. To imply that it merely means "Do not aggressively injure" is a strange misconception.

As has been before remarked in connection with missionary disparagement of Confucius on the same score, the attempted differentiation of the two formulas amounts only to suggesting that the Golden Rule means "do gratuitous favours if you would like to have such favours done to you." This is to make the 'positive' form positively non-moral, leaving moral value only to the 'negative,' so-called. A due attention to the negative might have saved Sidgwick from his fallacious criticism, at which Hobbes and Puffendorff would have stared.

Similarly open to demur is Professor Croom Robertson's summing-up that "the two salient features of Hobbes's morality, impressed on it by the reaction of a timorous spirit and calculating intellect against the anarchy and confusion of his time, were its arbitrariness and its selfishness."[2] As to the arbitrariness there need be no debate; but the Professor should have taken note of the fact that all the then conflicting ethical doctrines were just as arbitrary as those of Hobbes, which makes the criticism imperfectly judicial. But as to 'selfishness' it is quite misleading. Hobbes's morality is primarily one of self-renunciation, albeit for self-preservation; and not only is it for practical purposes less selfish than that of the fanatics whom he resisted: it more definitely barred selfishness by argument than they did by precept. A few pages further on the critic acknowledges how later thinkers, of Bentham's school, "were able to see in Hobbes *what he actually was*, a man who had the same regard that they had to common weal

[1] *History of Ethics*, p. 167, *note*.

[2] *Hobbes*, p. 215.

as the true aim of human action, and the same faith in intelligence as the sole means of realizing it." But the Professor, who seems to make 'calculating' a term of disparagement, probably meant that Hobbes grounded his plea for the civil power on men's primary self-regard, even while protesting against their blind disregard of their true interest in the zeal of their false opinions. That brings us to the kind of ethical as distinguished from political criticism which was passed upon Hobbes by contemporary English philosophers.

§ 5. *Anti-Hobbes.*

The most memorable of the other systematic English moralists of Hobbes's day was Richard Cumberland (Bishop of Peterborough from 1691), who in his Latin disquisition De Legibus Naturae, published in 1672, combated Hobbes's system as a set of "wicked doctrines," of which the foundations were "diametrically opposite, not to religion only, but to all civil society."[1] This ought to have won much favour for the treatise; but, besides being ill-written and very ill-arranged, it was badly transcribed for the press, and still worse printed, the errors accumulating in successive editions; and though the notorious Dr. Samuel Parker in 1681 published an alleged abridgment (on the score that "very few have been able to master its sense"); though the translation published in a bulky quarto in 1726, with much extra matter by the translator, found some 800 subscribers; and though yet another translation appeared at Dublin in 1750, the work finally failed to carry weight with the philosophical world.

Cumberland's work is visibly conditioned by that of Hobbes, the expository method of which it imitates so far as the author could; and its gist, set forth in the Introduction, is in fact but a formal conversion of Hobbes's first deductive position. In all human beings, says the bishop, there is implanted, obviously by God, the perception that the way to their own happiness is the practice of "benevolence towards all rationals." The Christian bishop, in fact, takes up the position assumed by the Chinese Mih-Teih some two thousand years before,[2] certainly improving on him in point of elaboration, but hardly in respect of consistency. A "benevolence towards all rationals" which so pointedly excluded benevolence towards Hobbes must have suggested even to some orthodox readers a misgiving as to the foundations of the new system. Part of the rational case against Hobbes had been that he was more royalist

[1] Maxwell's trans. (1726) *Philosophical Inquiry into the Laws of Nature*, Introd. § 30.
[2] See above, p. 158.

than the kings themselves—a point put by Cumberland; but the bishop evoked the criticism that he could not conform to his own principle for the space of his own Introduction.

There was, in fact, no fundamental philosophic difference between the two systems. Cumberland, following Grotius, went the whole way with Hobbes in positing a moral law deducible by reason, without revelation, as having been implanted in human nature by deity. Whether Hobbes thought about deity as Cumberland considered right, mattered nothing: both affirmed the deducible moral law. Hobbes began his deduction from a state of primitive human life in which society was but inchoate, and argued that the spontaneous tendency of each to seek his own advantage forced upon all the perception that there must be a restraining law, under which each gave up his 'natural right' to do as he would, in order to secure peace and safety. Cumberland, not attempting directly to deny Hobbes's account of the primordial social state, though he rightly claimed to modify it, blankly affirms that every one who used his reason could see that if only all are actively benevolent towards all, all things would go well. The conditional proposition, introduced by the 'if,' was one that Hobbes would not have dreamt of disputing, he being at the sociological stage before men suspected an element of evil in the population principle under all social systems. As we have seen, he claimed that his own doctrine would secure universal happiness. What he would probably have disputed was the proposition (*a*) that *all* men could see by the use of reason the force of what was asserted, and (*b*) the implication that, if they saw it, they could proceed successfully to act upon it.

In a country in which religious bodies of men had never, within living memory, been able in general decently to tolerate each other's theological notions, any more than Cumberland could forgive those of Hobbes, the elaborate episcopal statement of the simple theorem of Mih-Teih might have been expected to elicit a sad smile or a shrug of the shoulders from all whose ethic went any deeper than a facile protestation of Christian sentiments without the slightest thought of applying them to practice. If Hobbes was tactically 'in the air' at the end of his 'tractation,' Cumberland was so at the start, with his Chinese forerunner. Not sufficiently benevolent himself to abstain from ascribing gross wickedness to the framer of a formally different doctrine, he demonstrated a conditional proposition about the *obligation* of absolute benevolence which practically applied to no human society that ever existed. And the proposition stultifies at once his theology and his ethic. In

effect he claims that all men are divinely constituted so as to be able to perceive the way to universal felicity, while tacitly conceding that in the mass they have never taken it. Thus we have one more thesis of the failure of Omnipotence to realize the ends thereof, and the impotence of men to follow what they can clearly see to be the way to happiness.

Not content with affirming that all men are by God enabled, through the use of their reason, to see the expediency of universal active benevolence, Cumberland undertook to demonstrate that God had further shown his will by entailing internal or other rewards and punishments on good and evil actions. "Such actions as are contrary to a care of the public good, whether by a neglect or violation thereof, bring evil upon each part of the system of rationals, but the greatest upon the evil-doers themselves,"[1] is his formal proposition. This palpably untrue assertion he himself partly contradicts, three pages later:—

> "Because the connection of rewards and punishments with such actions as promote the public good, or the contrary, is *somewhat obscured* by those evil things which happen to the good, and those good things which happen to the evil, it seems necessary to our purpose carefully to show, That (notwithstanding these) that connexion is sufficiently constant and manifest in human nature, so that thence may with certainty be inferred the sanction of the law of Nature, commanding these actions and forbidding those."[2]

Let us first grant the proposition, and ask what follows? This, that a plain general law of human experience carries so little weight with most or many men that they commonly incur evil by disobeying it. What better justification could Hobbes have desired for *his* way of putting the case? The initial formal divergence by Cumberland from Hobbes's exposition, after the preliminary agreement as to there being an obvious rule of human conduct, deducible from the facts of the social life, yields either a perfectly nugatory assertion or one that expressly entitles the Hobbesian to re-instal the other, as alone having relevance to actual life.

The comfort found by Cumberland and his school in thus telling men what they might be, or ought to be, is doubtless in itself an interesting and perhaps even promising ethical phenomenon; but it should hardly count to them for righteousness to the extent of having them classed as morally superior to all who, viewing what men are, seek to plan restraints on their wrong-doing. Cumberland's

[1] Introd. § 14. Trans. p. 19. [2] *Id.* § 17.

specification of "the common good" as the end of moral action was unaccompanied by any attempt to discern wherein the common good lay. He suggests no change in the policy of his persecuting Church, or in the legal or constitutional system of his country, though he had expressly insisted on an active as against a passive benevolence. There seems to have been in his mind no notion more commensurate with his words than a prescription of charity to the poor. His services to ethics lie in (1) his virtual acceptance of the rationalistic position that the principles of morality are to be deduced from the life of man in society (his superposed theism being logically, like that of Hobbes, an 'appendage'); (2) his detection of the error of Hobbes's assumption that whereas society among animals is natural, among men it is only 'by covenant';[1] and (3) his resistance to the doctrine of passive obedience—a sufficiently common attitude, but one which on the part of a bishop counted for help to the cause of freedom.

Prof. Sidgwick pronounces that Cumberland is "noteworthy as having been the first to lay down that 'the common good of all' is the supreme end and standard."[2] This raises the question whether the term 'the commonweal' is supposed to have been habitually used without the force of 'common good'; and whether for ancient Rome and Greece the maxim '*salus populi suprema lex*' is held to have had no ethical content. The plain truth is that 'the common good' has always been assumed, explicitly or implicitly, to be the object of law; and that is a virtual institution of it as an ethical principle. It is plainly implicit in Hobbes's "conservation of men in multitudes"; and Henry More in his *Enchiridion Ethicum* alludes to preceding moralists who had placed the principle of morality in *Socialitas* or in *boni publici studium*.[3] For the rest, Sidgwick admits that in Cumberland's system "egoistic motive is indispensable, and is the normal spring of action in the earlier [!] stages of man's moral obedience," though "rational beings tend to rise" to such higher things as "love to God, regard for his honour, *and* disinterested affection for the common good."

Cudworth.—In the anti-Hobbes literature of Hobbes's day might be included formally, though not chronologically, Dr. Ralph Cudworth's TREATISE CONCERNING ETERNAL AND IMMUTABLE MORALITY, which was only posthumously published in 1731, though probably written fifty years before. Cudworth seems to have argued against Hobbes as early as 1644,[4] when he had circu-

[1] Trans. cited, ch. ii, § 6, p. 140. [2] *History of Ethics*, p. 174.
[3] *Enchiridion*, ed. 1711, p. 33 (schol. to cap. 4, lib 1).
[4] Cp. Whewell, *Lectures*, ed. 1862, p. 62; Croom Robertson, *Hobbes*, p. 215.

lated his views only in manuscript or private printed copies, though in practical politics the two were afterwards at one. By common consent Cudworth's very learned criticism misses its mark. The conception of eternal and immutable morality, strictly construed, is philosophically on a level with that of an eternal and immutable equator. Collated with the facts of human evolution it is meaningless save in the non-significant form that there is always some measure of right and wrong as between rational men. But Hobbes had expressly written:[1] "The laws of nature are immutable and eternal; for injustice, ingratitude, pride, iniquity, acception of persons, and the rest can never be made lawful. For it can never be that war shall preserve life, and peace destroy it." This gives everything that could intelligently be claimed from Cudworth's standpoint; it gives, indeed, a negative to Hobbes's own proposition that whatever the sovereign decreed was not only lawful but right. Cudworth, one of the most learned theists of his age, and master of a richly interesting vocabulary, contributed little, either in his INTELLECTUAL SYSTEM or in his MORALITY, to the analysis of human problems, though he wrote on second causes in such a fashion as to be accused of practical atheism. The contents of his fourth chapter tell of his historic philosophy, setting forth as they do that Moschus the Sidonian, inventor of the atomic philosophy, "is the same with Mochus the Physiologer, who is the same with Moses the Jewish lawgiver." Cudworth belongs not to modern mental science; Hobbes does.

Henry More.—Greater importance attaches in the history of ethics to Henry More, whose ENCHIRIDION ETHICUM, written in 1667 and published in 1678, was framed as an antidote to Hobbes, who for his part declared that if he ever found his own philosophy to be untenable he would adopt that of More. That scholar, poet, and Platonist seems indeed to have led a very enviable life, being in a position to devote himself to perpetual study and literary production in a 'paradise' in the country, in favour of which he abandoned all the clerical livings and university dignities that were offered him. Besides a number of extremely popular religious treatises he gave to the world a confident vindication of the belief in ghosts and evil spirits; and his ENCHIRIDION is on the whole his most considerate performance. Like all the other instructed men who sought to confute Hobbes, he so far accepts the naturalistic attitude as to find moral principles involved in or deducible from

[1] *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. 15. Cp. *Rudiments*, ch. iii. § 29.

the nature of man and his environment; and in repugning Hobbes's deduction of morality from the law of self-preservation he commits himself to another human standard, a faculty for being happy in virtuous conduct. For this faculty he invented the epithet "boniform," and he seems to identify it with what he calls "the sense of virtue"—an anticipation of the doctrine of the "moral sense" to be put forward later by Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

In so far as this was a qualification of Hobbes's position that all moral qualities are directly referable to the instinct of self-preservation, it was in the line of scientific advance. In so far as it amounted to a claim that men and things are framed to a good end in respect of a bias to or capacity for delighting in virtue, it was a mere evasion of the problem which had driven Hobbes to his task. If all men have the "boniform faculty," there is no problem; if only some have it, the assertion of that fact leaves the problem untouched. More was really writing in the interest of his theism. When he affirms the utility of the passions[1] it is by way of proving that the divine scheme is adapted to man's happiness. But inasmuch as he defines[2] good and evil as respectively favourable or unfavourable to perceptive life, or to the grades thereof, he too makes for the naturalistic view of morals which was now more and more pervading all critical thought. Not that More was seeking for a biological standard or clue. He would have regarded that as unspiritual, if not impious. He was really asserting or implying the conventional untruth that evildoers are necessarily unhappy, and that they accordingly worsen or shorten their own lives—a typical case of turning a partial truth of experience into an untruth by putting it as universal. We meet with it in ethical discussion in every age, always operating to turn ethical argument in a circle. More was very much of a Platonist, holding the doctrine that to live the ideal life of virtue was necessarily to be happy.

But the definite association of happiness with fullness of life, in an age in which the most prominent of all dogmas was that "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever," amounted to a step in the scientific as against the supernaturalist and dogmatic direction. Writing before Spinoza,[3] and from a theistic point of view from which Spinoza would have seemed atheistic, More wrought as did his greater successor for a way of thinking in which their religious premises disappeared as being finally irrelevant

[1] *Enchiridion*, lib. i, capp. 6 and 12.
[2] Lib. i, cap. 4, *noemata* i and ii.
[3] The Epist. Ded. is dated 1678, but the preface *ad lectorem* 1667.

to the moral problem. In More's *noemata*, or intellectual principles of morals, the duty of reciprocity is put[1] on the same footing as the rest, with no reference to religious sanctions. He even insists that these truths are appreciable by the simple intellect, apart from that "most divine part of the soul" which he calls "boniform."[2] The further position that it is only through the boniform faculty that we attain beatitude is evidently little fitted to detain judgment, save as an assertion that if men find no pleasure in goodness they will not practise it. And that proposition is as little conducive to theistic optimism as it is helpful to Hobbism.

Thus it was not the leaning to political absolutism which made Hobbes the most influential of English thinkers for half a century, absolutism being the special doctrine of the clergy, who detested him. It was on the one hand the power of his style and the force and clearness of his reasoning, as against opponents who attained to neither of these; and on the other hand the element of original thought that pervaded his work. His influence is indisputable.[3] Burnet's assertion that the impiety of his doctrines "was acceptable to men of corrupt minds" is a typically ecclesiastical futility: Charles II could never be induced by Clarendon to read the LEVIATHAN. More and Cudworth and Cumberland alike failed to overpower his influence, the last by reason of his maladroit method and his Latin, even where he was putting a sound criticism; and More by reason of his adherence to Platonic sentiment and Platonic logic. Hobbes, in fact, was never overthrown. He was assimilated, corrected, and turned to fresh account, even by men who disliked his politics too much to recognize him. His philosophy is largely subsumed in that of Locke; and its potency was such that it carried the influence of Locke, politics apart, in the direction of Hobbes's foundation principles rather than of those formally theistic principles with which Locke sought to overrule them.

[1] *Noema* 14. [2] Cap. iv, § 1.
[3] Cp. Whewell, *Lectures*, pp. 55-59, 73, 79, 80, 86.

Chapter IV

SPINOZA AND LOCKE

§ 1. *Spinoza.*

The first great figure in European moral philosophy after Hobbes is that of Spinoza[1] (1632–1677), greatest of Jewish thinkers, and one of the most radically influential on modern thought. Throughout his work may be seen the critical and political influence of Hobbes, of Greek ethics, and of scholastic and Jewish pantheism; but no modern thinker has more signally thought for himself than the author of the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus (1670), the (unfinished) Tractatus Politicus, and the Ethica (also posthumously published, 1677). In the first-named work, starting from suggestions of Hobbes and of earlier Jewish scholars, he produced the most searching criticism of Biblical 'revelation' that had yet been put in print in a serious fashion, though views more revolutionary than those he penned had been privately current, and probably were held by him. And in both Tractates, again starting from the basis and upon the inspiration of Hobbes, he rationally refuses to let the individual principle of self-preservation sanction the absolute rule of one.

Like Hobbes, Spinoza writes with a keen regard to his own political circumstances; and his conclusion is a defence of the 'aristocratic' or middle-class republic in which he lived under the patronage of the great Jan de Witt, and which had then become the freest community in Europe as regarded religious toleration. But his position is strictly and thoroughly reasoned; and he would not have admitted that the hideous murder of the two De Witts by an Orange mob (1672) did anything but tragically confirm his doctrine. As deeply concerned as Hobbes for order, he saw in mental liberty the limiting principle of the power of the State. Recognizing that, though the obtrusion of private opinion is often foolish, there is no effective freedom of thought without freedom of utterance, he rightly limited the controlling power of the State to such utterance only as endangers its own existence or safety as

[1] Baruch d'Espinoza; name changed by him to Benedict de Spinoza after his excommunication by his synagogue; 1656.

a community.[1] On the other hand, the very strength of the commonwealth depends largely on its intellectual life, which freedom fosters; and the State, enjoining tolerance on sects, is itself bound to practise it. Spinoza's political doctrine, in short, is a correction of the arbitrary bias of Hobbes, upon Hobbes's own primary principle of self-preservation. The conception of single sovereignty he shows to be really chimerical, monarchy being always in fact a varying system of virtual aristocracy.[2]

In ethics Spinoza is on one side as definitely naturalistic as Hobbes. In philosophy, however, he substituted pantheism for the formal theism of the English thinker, and was so nearly thoroughgoing as to be termed by the theists an atheist and by Hegel an 'a-Cosmic' philosopher—that is, one who submerged the universe in deity. As monistic atheism and strict pantheism practically come to the same thing in respect of ethics, the ethic of Spinoza is thus in its applications necessarily naturalistic. His incomplete pantheism, however, so affected it on the metaphysical side as to create an insoluble duality in his system. Where Hobbes was content to posit Right and Wrong as relations arising out of human society, denying their absolute or à priori existence, Spinoza introduces, at this one point, the verbal pantheistic denial of the existence or reality of good and evil even as relativities. His point was that (Omnipotence being conceived as absolutely good) all existence must be held to be necessarily and *rightly* what it is, and the human conception of Evil (as a cosmic principle or fact) must be dismissed as illusion.

It is true that Spinoza does not *call* deity Good, being so far put on his guard by Maimonides; but it is clear that the assumption underlies the whole of his as of the other philosophical Jewish conceptions of God. He could not without such a presupposition have urged as he did that love towards God was the necessary outcome of the knowledge of Nature. The notion of a God who was indifferent alike to Good and Evil, by reason of transcending the finite relativity for which alone the Good and the Evil existed, could not have originally suggested itself to any one as a basis for a precept of Love, with or without a deduction from that of a code or principle of conduct. That the universe is not rationally to be thought either good or bad is a logical conclusion from the implications of the idea of Infinity; but Spinoza's handling of the matter

[1] *Tractatus Theol.-Polit.* c. 20.
[2] *Tract. Polit.* c. 6. There is a very fair summary of Spinoza's politics in Prof. W. A. Dunning's *History of Political Theories* (ii), *From Luther to Montesquieu*, 1905, p. 309 *sq.*

reveals a state of oscillation between that logical perception and the recognition of the ethical dilemma which it sets up for every form of theism. It appears to be in order to cover that dilemma that he resorts to a wilfully enigmatical procedure, laying down the proposition[1] that "*if* men were born free they would, so long as they remained free, have absolutely no conception of good or evil." By his own demonstration, to be born free would be to be absolutely rational and omniscient; and he adds the scholium that the hypothesis put "is false and inconceivable." Why then was it tendered? The only satisfying explanation is that Spinoza was entangled in a mode of argument which had come down to him in an august tradition, and from which his philosophy never freed itself. He is thinking emotionally of a Good God while he is arguing to the effect that the ideas of good and evil have no relation to the conception of Infinite God.

Among the Jewish pantheists of the Middle Ages, who are Spinoza's chief spiritual ancestors, the intellectual confusion can be seen growing up. Disciples on the one hand of Aristotle and on the other hand clinging to their racial God-Idea in a universalized form, they saw that the conception of infinity cancelled the old Jewish idea of deity as moved to passion by evil; but they always put the philosophic truth with fallacious reservations. "Perfect intellect," wrote Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides), "forms no conception of good and evil, only of true and false. Such was the first state of Adam. Good and evil belong to the region of probable opinion."[2] Here the fallacy is obvious: true and false, equally with good and evil, belong to the region of probable opinion; and if 'intellect' be ascribed to the Absolute and Infinite the fallacy is extended to the cosmic conception. The notion of intellect as infinite came to the Jewish philosophers through Aristotle; and some of them, concerned to keep their racial faith independent of Gentilism, evolved the position that "the perfection of God consists not in knowledge, as the Aristotelians say, but in love."[3] Chasdai Creskas, who wrote thus, penned one of the earliest and clearest statements of the principle of the determination of the will, noting that its act is "free in so far as it is not *compelled*, but *necessary* in so far as it is not *uncaused*."[4] This philosophic Hebrew lore was part of the deep-rooting early culture of Spinoza,[5] who transferred to it the emotional acceptance which his fellow-Jews gave to the ordinary Biblical and Talmudic lore.

[1] *Ethica*, Pars iv, prop. 68.
[2] *More Nebuchim* (*Guide of the Perplexed*), ch. 2, cited by Sir F. Pollock, *Spinoza*, 2nd ed. p. 89. Cp. S. Karppe, *Essais de critique et d'histoire de philos.*, 1902, p. 55 *sq.*
[3] Chasdai Creskas of Barcelona (*circa* 1400), cited by Pollock, p. 90.
[4] *Id. ib.*
[5] *Id.* p. 91.

All Jewish pantheism so far conformed to the racial tradition as to cling to the idea of the love of God—God's love for man and man's due reciprocal love. And this remains embedded in Spinoza's pantheism. For him the love of God is man's highest blessedness; and he seeks always to connect that conception with his otherwise humanistic ethic. Thus his pantheism remains gratuitously anthropomorphic despite all his logical concern to eliminate anthropomorphism. After declaring (1) that 'intellect' and 'will' if ascribed to the Absolute can agree 'only in name'[1] with those terms as applied to the human mind (which amounts to saying that as applied to Deity they are for men meaningless); and (2) that "properly speaking God does not love or hate any one";[2] and yet again (3) that "whatever is, is in God, and without God nothing can be or be conceived,"[3] he affirms that "God loves himself with an infinite intellectual love."[4] By his own express showing the last proposition can have no meaning, the predicates having no intelligible application to 'God.' And yet he follows it with this: "The intellectual love of the mind [*i.e.* of man] towards God is that very love of God with which God loves himself, not inasmuch as he is infinite, but *inasmuch as he can be explained by the essence of the human mind considered under the aspect of eternity; that is to say*, the intellectual love of the mind towards God is part of the infinite love with which God loves himself."[5]

At this point not only has the normal religious meaning of 'love of God' completely disappeared, but all meaning has disappeared from all the terms. A God who does not love and is incapable of passions, and cannot be rationally called 'intellect,' loves himself with an infinite intellectual love which *is* what the finite love of men for him *would* be if it could be conceived as infinite, which would be a contradiction in terms. Obviously the synagogue was quite entitled to expel Spinoza as a man having no real part in Judaism, though even Judaism should have barred the curse of excommunication. What Spinoza has done is to work out with the intensest sincerity the argument which reduces pantheism to a name having nothing really in common with theism, yet all the while preserving the semblance of theism. Theism he had shown to be a hallucination, yet his whole argument is but a distillation of that into a quasi-intellectual form by manipulation of words without intellectual content. The truth is that Spinoza's metaphysic (which exhibits his honesty by the very 'geometrical' form into which he has cast it, since that makes its analysis the more easy) is fundamentally divided against itself, and sets up the same duality in his psychology and ethic. He is always

[1] *Eth.* Pars i. prop. 17, scholium, *end.* [2] Pars v, prop. 17, Coroll.
[3] Pars i, prop. 15. [4] Pars v, prop. 35. [5] Pars v, prop. 36.

oscillating between his principle of 'reason,' which is pantheistically conceived as a process of sheer emotionless knowing, and his perception that 'feeling' is also of the essence of the moral nature. Instead of positing this quasi-twofold character of personality as a datum, he alternately tries to put the whole problem in terms of each impulsion.

Thus his proposition (so fascinating to all students at first reading) that "an emotion (*affectus*) can neither be overpowered nor destroyed save by a contrary emotion, *stronger for the controlling of emotion*" (*fortiorem affectu coercendo*),[1] turns out to be but a half-truth. Already there is confusion: the new emotion is apparently conceived as controlling not merely the other emotion, but emotion in general—*i.e.* itself included. A little later it is the 'contrary' that is stressed.[2] But soon we are told that "To all actions to which we can be determined by emotion, which is passion, we can be determined by reason, *without that*."[3] And then comes this: "Emotion, which is passion, ceases to be passion when we form a clear and distinct idea of it";[4] and this: "Insofar as the mind understands all things as necessary, it has greater power over the emotions, or is less subject to them."[5] Thus the mind, conceived as reasoning, is declared to have exactly that power over emotion which we had been told was applicable only by another and contrary emotion. Yet it had been expressly declared[6] that "A true knowledge of good and evil cannot as such (*quatenus vera*) control any emotion, but only inasmuch as it is *considered as emotion*." Either, then, Spinoza has been contemplating the same mental process alternately as emotion and as reason, without realizing his confusion, or he has come to suspect that the conventional dichotomy is false—that a process of reasoning can be in terms of feeling, and that emotion is not extra-rational. This important perception, however, he did not develop; and, though Spencer long ago showed that "the commonly assumed *hiatus* between Reason and Instinct has no existence,"[7] and that "no kind of feeling, sensational or emotional, can be wholly freed from the intellectual element,"[8] Spinoza's first formula is still treated as unchallengeable by such an expert as Höffding,[9] and appears to be implicitly assented to by Prof. William James.[10] We shall have to deal with the problem when we come to Hume, who made explicit the dichotomy which in Spinoza is implicit, denying that reason could control emotion.

[1] Pars iv, prop. 7. Mr. Elwes translates: "with more power for controlling emotion."
[2] *Id.* scholium ii to prop. 37.
[3] Pars iv, prop. 59. Mr. Elwes renders *qui passio est* by: "wherein the mind is passive." This may be defended. But in the next citation he renders the same words by "which is passion."
[4] Pars v, prop. 3. [5] *Id.* prop. 6. [6] Pars iv, prop. 14.
[7] *Principles of Psychology*, 3rd ed. § 203. [8] *Id.* § 209.
[9] *Outlines of Psychology*, Eng. trans. 1891, p. 284. [10] *Principles of Psychology*, 1891, i, 552.

When we come to the close consideration of Spinoza's ethic proper we discover that in terms of his cosmic philosophy it can have no reasoned connection whatever with his God-idea. Beatitude, he reasons, is to be found only in the love of God; yet he gives, and can give, no reason why man should love God, who loves nothing but himself. His position is reducible to this: that God loves himself, and we, existing as we do in God, *must* love him too. If that were so, why resort to persuasion? Spinoza here reaches nothing. The more we *know* of Nature, he contends, the more we *know* of God: then what we are to love is our knowledge. With goodness Spinoza's God has nothing to do, save in a sense in which he has just as much to do with evil, causing the events and actions which we cognize as good or evil. What he causes may be evil for us, but for him evil does not exist, any more than good. Man, then, is not called upon to love God as Good. "In no case do we strive for, wish for, long for, or desire anything because it is good; but, on the contrary, *we judge a thing good because we strive for it*, wish for it," etc.[1] There is thus no reason for loving either God or knowledge, or both as one, but *if* we love either, either is for us good; if not, not.

If, however, Spinoza be held to teach simply that men *should* 'intellectually love' God in order to be perfectly happy, he figures as a kind of 'pantheistic hedonist,' who makes our 'intellectual happiness' the end, aim, and criterion of our action. The summing-up of the ethic would then run: You want to be happy; then learn all you can about Nature and Man, which is the way to know God; knowing God is loving God; loving God is perfect happiness.[2] But if knowledge = love = happiness, evil would appear not to exist for instructed man any more than for God, though the very word 'happiness' presupposes sorrow, and sorrow is actually diagnosed by Spinoza under many symptoms. He is, in fact, broadly prescribing the Stoical and Aristotelian regimen of finding peace in philosophic realization of the All as decreed by perfect intelligence, though he is careful to stipulate that every form of pleasure that does not affect the supremacy of reason is a good thing, desirable because (or *if*) we desire it. And in all this there is no ethical guidance. When, after his exposition[3] of the determinateness of will, he seeks to connect conduct at once with his God-idea and with utility, he is obliged to anthropomorphize more than ever. The passage is at

[1] Pars iii, prop. 9, scholium, *end*.
[2] Cp. Pars iv, propp. 28, 37; Pars v, propp. 14, 15, 16, 24.
[3] Pars ii, propp. 48, 49, and scholium.

once an inadequate vindication of determinism, a breach in his own pantheism, and a stumbling-block to his practical ethic:—

> "The knowledge of this doctrine conduces to right-living (*ad usum vitæ*).....(1) inasmuch as it teaches us to act solely according to the command [or will] of God (*ex solo Dei nutu agere*), and to be partakers of the divine nature; and that the more as we perform more perfect actions and more and more understand God. This doctrine therefore, besides restoring complete peace to the soul (*animum*), also has this, that it teaches us wherein our highest felicity or beatitude consists—namely, in the sole cognition of God, through which we are led to do only those acts which love and piety prescribe."

The very term and concept of "command of God,"[1] with the implication of conscious obedience to a specific law, is incompatible with his own demonstration that purpose and will must not be assigned to the Absolute in any signification corresponding to the human. By his own doctrine, all events and acts equally take place by the causation of God,[2] for whom there is neither good nor evil in the Cosmos. The idea of obedience is a direct reversion to Judaism: the Spinozistic thesis was that there can be no disobedience, and it is here brought down to the plane of theological determinism. By his showing, we are of necessity partakers of the divine nature, and cannot be out of it. *Religio* here, then, is out of relation to ethic. And when we come to the definition of *pietas*, later,[3] it proves to be "the desire of right-doing which is ingenerated in us in that we live by the guidance of reason." Thus the ethical residuum of the argument is pure rationalism; the moral bias, whatever it may be, is left to the test of intellectual experience; and evil is to be known and repelled inasmuch as it conflicts with 'blessedness.'

The next step, obviously, must be to lay down some rule for the *conflicting* propensions of men, all occurring by divine causation; and at once we take our stand on the naturalistic position of Hobbes:—

> "Since reason requires nothing contrary to nature, it requires therefore this, that every man should love himself, should seek his own utility—what is really useful to him; should desire everything which really leads man to greater perfection; and should absolutely strive, each for himself, to preserve his own Being in so far as he can."

Between this and the ethical principle of recognition of the claims

[1] This occurs earlier also: Pars i, prop. 33, scholium ii; also in the *Tract. Theol.-Polit.* ch. iii, par. iii, where the phrase is *Dei æterna decreta*.
[2] *Id.* prop. 32, coroll. ii. [3] Pars iv, prop. 37, scholium i.

of others there is interposed a curious dialectic in which 'virtue' is expressly defined as "human power"[1] [*i.e.* of true self-preservation], and then immediately becomes a mental and moral dictate:—"To act absolutely from virtue (*ex virtute*) is in us nothing else than to act and live and conserve one's Being by the leading of reason (these three terms signifying the same thing), on the fundamental principle of seeking one's own utility."[2] Spinoza, it will be seen, seeks to be thoroughgoing in the application of every critical principle. Here he almost outgoes Hobbes, insisting that a perfectly rational pursuit of one's own advantage will necessarily secure right conduct all round. For every man will desire to see his happiness shared by others,[3] and will more constantly desire that good which he sees to be loved by others.[4] Society is the condition of the highest mutual usefulness, and is to be cherished accordingly. Beyond that, Spinoza's ethics, as set forth by him in the treatise of that name, does not go. It is evident, from a sentence at the end of the scholium to Proposition xxxv of Part IV, that he regarded the practical development of the principle of social utility as a matter of politics: ethics was for him a statement of the attitude of the reason to the problem of conduct in the light of a philosophy of the universe; and the TRACTATUS POLITICUS must accordingly be taken as his practical application of ethic to action.

It is somewhat remarkable that the greatest intellectual effort of Spinoza to frame a philosophy of life should thus be so much more of a stimulant to further criticism than a durable construction, and that his specific ethic should raise more questions than it answers. It is even arguable that it excludes ethics by more than one of its positions. Committing himself to the position that all things in Nature are necessarily 'perfect'[5] in their kind (in the sense that they are as they are by divine causation, which could omit nothing), he yet makes 'perfection' at once a matter of cosmic grades on the one hand and of human preferences on the other, though he has declared that the perfection of things is quite independent of human preference. Sorrow[6] is thus defined as "the transition of a man from a

[1] Pars iv, prop. 20, Demonstr. [2] *Id.* prop. 24.
[3] *Id.* prop. 37. [4] *Ib.* Demonstr. ii. [5] App. to Pars i.
[6] Spinoza's word is *tristitia*, which normally means sorrow; and Mr. Picton (*Spinoza*, p. 111) righty translates it 'grief.' Sir F. Pollock (*Spinoza*, 2nd ed. p. 217) renders it 'pain.' But in his *explicatio* Spinoza says that he omits definitions of *hilaritas*, *titillatio*, *melancholia*, and *dolor*, because they "refer chiefly to the body"; and here Sir F. Pollock translates *dolor* by 'grief,' while Mr. Picton more defensibly renders it 'pain,' which is both its primary meaning and that required by the context. It is clear that Spinoza meant by *tristitia* mental pain, not bodily; and 'pain' normally includes the latter, which is its normal force. Grief is not fitly to be termed a bodily affection, though *melancholia* was so considered in Spinoza's day. Mr. Elwes, however, follows Sir F. Pollock in his translation.

greater to a lesser perfection," and *vice versâ*.[1] 'Perfection,' already defined in a non-moral sense (= completeness), thus in turn loses all meaning, all things and all states being perfections from the cosmic standpoint,[2] yet greater and lesser. As well say "greater and lesser *x*." The practical and the logical outcome is that evil is to be defined, if at all, as a lesser perfection than good; and we can but ask, Why not simply *say* evil and good? 'Greater or lesser perfection' is not a *definition* of anything, since not only are all things one or the other in terms of the theory, but everything is at once both in relation to other things. Strictly, the argument has become a solemn sophism, though its sincerity is as obvious as its fallacy. It is a gyration in the enchanted circle of a tradition.

It would seem as if Spinoza shaped his ethic in the way he did as much because of his desire to find an antidote for moral pain as from a scientific concern for pure truth. The 'geometric' form is a precaution against emotional bias; but the bias is there, and the very reaction sets up another. Upon the pantheistic principles which he postulates, there can be no rational denunciation of evil of any kind: it is all part of the divine causation, which transcends every human idea of plan or purpose. All has its being in God. And this conception seems to underlie his strange dictum[3] that "Penitence is not a virtue—that is to say, does not arise from reason; but he who repents of his act is twice miserable or impotent." Even if virtue had not been already defined as a 'power,' we might well assent to the first proposition: penitence is an act, not a rule or a characteristic, and therefore cannot rationally be termed a virtue. But to say that it "does not arise from reason" is to reveal an inchoate psychology. We might almost ask, From what else can it come? Repentance is, however, one of the states of mind in regard to which the old dichotomy between reason and emotion is most plainly irrelevant. Given a passionate act, the change by which the doer passes to regret involves *some* process of judgment, else there is no repentance. Given a deliberate act, proceeding on sheer error of judgment, the doer will still 'repent,' especially if his error has wrought serious injury. Unless by *pœnitentia* Spinoza meant self-punishment (as, scourging) his proposition would seem fitted to recommend itself solely to the quite non-moral man—Iago or Borgia or Richard.[4]

It may have been the influence of Hobbes, again, that moved

[1] Pars iii, App. of *Affectuum Definitiones*, Def. 3. [2] Pars i, prop. 33, note 2.
[3] Pars iv, prop. 54.
[4] Mr. Allanson Picton is disturbed by the position, which he hardly seeks to defend (*Spinoza*, pp. 160–1).

him to his memorable pronouncement that "Pity (*commiseratio*) in a man who lives by reason is in itself an evil, and useless."[1] The argument is that pity is a mode of sorrow, which is evil or pain; that the good effect which follows from it can flow equally from reason; that pity is as irrelevant to the determinate course of things as are hatred, derision, and contempt; and that the rational man will succour distress without letting himself feel a compassion which is pain. This is defended by the apologist on the score that, as Spinoza himself put it, pity is easily deceived by false tears. But though that is a caveat worth putting, the teaching is psychologically wrong. Spinoza here in a way outgoes the later thesis of Mandeville that we relieve distress only to save our own feelings; for he would have us eliminate the feelings, in which case we should certainly not be more ready to relieve the distress. As he himself adds, the man who has neither pity nor a rational desire to relieve distress is a monster. There is small reason, then, to bar pity.

It may have been the common theological device of insinuating distress to be a good *because* it stirs pity that moved Spinoza to his hardness at this point. That sentimental fallacy has always appealed to intellectually unstable people—as Sir Thomas Browne and Coleridge, of whom the latter in different moods acclaimed and execrated it.[2] It may thus make for evil, as tending to make men leave removable social evils uncured. But no such explanation is offered by Spinoza; and his position as to pity must be set down as one of the many points at which à priori habits of thought put him in collision with himself. On the one hand he makes evil *non-ens* as a cosmic conception; and he has classed it as only a "lesser perfection"; on the other hand, he is so resentful of concrete evil that he sees no use in a form of pain that chastens character and makes for love.

But, while theory thus moves him to formal divagation, Spinoza is almost morbidly sensitive to the evil around him. Declaring that human evil is a necessary part of the divine All, and that contempt and derision are irrational, he is yet as vehement in his censures of human imperfection as any great thinker ever was; more so than Hobbes, who is too keenly intellectual to be truly passionate, though his bias deflects his judgment even as passion might. Of Spinoza, on the other hand, it might almost be said that his very resentment of human animalism and stupidity is intellectual, for we know even from a theologically hostile Christian biographer that he was gently

[1] Pars iv, prop. 50.
[2] See the author's *New Essays Towards a Critical Method*, 1897, pp. 152-53.

patient of the narrow thought of common folk, who in turn loved him. But his smouldering passion against the coarse and violent pietistic life around him reveals itself at times in passages so scathing as to embarrass his enthusiastic disciples,[1] and to give hostile religious critics their chance of proclaiming that he was "no saint"[2]—an unwary attack from the Christian side, with its hierarchy of slaughterous and censorious saints, from Peter and Paul to Bernard. Spinoza will compare well enough with these; and the virulences of Leibnitz, who called him a bad man,[3] and of Berkeley, who (though following him in philosophy more than he knew) pronounced him a weak and wicked writer, do but recoil on their own memories. They were in their way less balanced than he; and their hold on men's esteem to-day is slighter than his. But, between the inconsistencies of his schematic position and the practical error of formally connecting ethical principles with a theorem of love to God which yielded them neither logical support nor emotional sanction, Spinoza's ETHICA, with all its high impressiveness and its ratiocinative energy, is in its own way as inconclusive a scientific treatise as Hobbes's LEVIATHAN.

It cannot be said, then, that *directly* Spinoza does either a practical or a theoretic service to ethics, save by profoundly undermining the grounds of dogmatic religious confidence for all who could follow his reasoning. This it doubtless did; but the practical gain was to be reaped only when men for ethical purposes put their theism aside, which for the majority meant putting aside Spinoza's formal pantheism likewise. The gain was not reaped when Pope, echoing Spinozism as communicated to him through Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke, affirmed that "Whatever is, is right," "and partial evil universal good." Pope's own unmatched malice was never modified by *his* pseudo-universalism. Nor, perhaps, was Spinoza's best service done by his didactic prescription of the ideal of "the free man" in the last book of the ETHICA, for that was substantially the teaching of Stoicism, a counsel of self-liberation from hampering desire, and a placing of happiness in the life of the moralized mind as the highest 'perfection' open to man. Spinoza's 'free man' equates with the Greek sage and the 'superior man' of Confucius, a stately ideal, but not designed for 'human nature's daily food.' He professed to show men the way to blessedness (*beatitudo*). The obvious practical need of his age as of ours was to show how people who find their

[1] Cp. Picton, pp. 132-33. [2] Prof. E E. Powell, *Spinoza and Religion*, p. 43.
[3] This was before Leibnitz took occasion to call upon Spinoza and obtain from him transcripts of parts of the *Ethica*.

'perfection' on a lower plane might spare each other much suffering by agreeing to 'live and let live.' This guidance Spinoza did ably and worthily seek to supply in the TRACTATUS POLITICUS, which, even in its unfinished state, was a help and stimulus to political liberalism in England; though Locke, who probably profited by it, was too much afraid of *odium theologicum* to give credit in Spinoza's case any more than in that of Hobbes, whom he professed never to have read, though their teachings often coincide almost verbally. Spinoza, freely following Hobbes where he could, not only rejects his absolutism while planning a remarkably shrewd constitutional system for monarchies, but innovates notably in political ethic by propounding, two hundred years before Henry George, the doctrine that "the fields, the whole land, and if possible the houses, should be public property—namely, vested in him who holds the right of the State"—that is, the constitutional monarch, who should let them at a yearly rent; and this should be the Single Tax in time of peace.[1] Here ethic takes on a new extension; and though Spinoza came to the conclusion that women can neither be on a political equality with men nor bear rule, he faced that question as one involving moral principles. So, while he anticipated Kant in trying to make philosophic ethics consist in the enunciation of an ideal attitude, he does finally apply living moral principles to human conduct in mass, finding no political clues in his pantheism. He was, it is true, not far from the beginning of ethical politics, coming only fifty years after Grotius; and his discussion of women's rights[2] recalls in some ways Aristotle's discussion of slavery; but it is still an attempt to square polity with the notion of justice.

It is thus mainly in his real reduction of ethics to naturalist principles in a system which professed to trace everything to God, and particularly in his philosophic dismissal of the neo-theological chimera of free-will, that Spinoza plays his great part in the reconstruction of moral philosophy, begun by Grotius and greatly advanced by Hobbes. Wherever the reasoning of Hobbes and Spinoza on determinism is understood, cruelty is rationally disallowed; and the fact that Spinoza, a 'spiritualist' in the sense that he declared God to be the totality of Being, came to the same conclusion about Will as did the 'materialist' Hobbes, has counted for much in bringing philosophy in general to the rational point of view; albeit Spinoza is materialist enough when his arbitrary pantheistic framework is put aside, as it is by his pantheistic adherents when they come to ethical practice.

[1] *Tract. Polit.* c. vi, § 12. [2] *Tract. Polit.* end.

The late Mr. Allanson Picton, whose SPINOZA: A HANDBOOK TO THE ETHICS (1907) has much merit, detracted somewhat from that merit by much irrelevant censure of 'materialism,' while claiming in his preface "to avoid discussing the philosophy of Spinoza more than is absolutely necessary to an understanding of his moral code." On p. 21 he speaks of "the rapidly diminishing school of molecular mechanists" who "still cling to the theory that the whole universe, with its life and feeling, can be *explained* by a chance-begotten arrangement of dead atoms." No modern school ever posited "dead atoms." Mr. Picton proceeds to assert that "outside this ancient and dying sect there is a general recognition that when we look at anything such as sun or moon or tree or flower, we—*or* the God in us—*in some measure* make what we see." It would have been a better service to Spinoza's memory to extract his homocentric ethic from its pantheistic setting than thus to impose upon it a formula which he never countenanced. The theorem implies that we make each other, and the viper and the typhoon, and God to boot—"in some measure."

Nonetheless Mr. Picton records (p. 62) that the "dependence of the mind upon the multiplex modifications of the body becomes ultimately the key to Spinoza's theory of salvation as unfolded in his concluding book." The fact is that neither for the pantheistic nor for the atheistic monist is mind thinkable apart from organism. And Spinoza, following Hobbes, very definitely came to that standpoint when he wrote that "the mind knows not itself save as it perceives the ideas of the modifications (*affectionum*) of the body."[1] Spinoza in fact anticipates the modern conclusion, put by the so-called materialist Büchner, that materialism and spiritualism are alike either half-truths or misnomers, the whole truth including both aspects of the universe. Materialism so-called has indeed never been anything but an effort to force the scientific truth upon a world trained in the tradition of an unscientific spiritism. And to do this was part of the general service of Spinoza to scientific thought.

Of his total philosophic progress perhaps the truest account is that given by Sir Frederick Pollock, who among the English expositors of Spinoza still best combines critical insight with appreciation: "It is remarkable that the theological colouring of Spinoza's philosophy becomes fainter as we proceed in the *Ethics*, and in the third and fourth Parts *Deus* appears more and more like a bare synonym for *Natura*. But then, just as one might begin to think that the verbal disguise has been completely thrown off, we come upon the intellectual love of God in the fifth Part. After all, God has not been reduced to Nature, but Nature exalted to God. Spinoza begins and ends

[1] *Ethica*, Pars ii, prop. 23.

with theological terms; and yet, when we translate his doctrines into modern language, we find a view of the world standing wholly apart from those which have been propounded or seriously influenced by theology. His earlier writings help us to understand the seeming riddle. He started with the intention of making theology philosophical, but with the determination to follow reason to the uttermost. Reason led him beyond the atmosphere of theology altogether, but his advance was so continuous that the full extent of it was hardly perceived by himself."[1]

§ 2. *Locke.*

Locke (1632–1704) would have refused to admit that he had any affinities with Spinoza, whom he classes with Hobbes as "justly decried"; but he was more akin to him than he knew. On the political side they are of the same spirit; and it was after a stay in Holland that Locke produced his TWO TREATISES OF GOVERNMENT (1690) in the same year with the ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING. His "arch-philosopher" in politology was ostensibly Hooker, whom he thus praises;[2] but his relation to Hobbes is not wholly hostile, though he stringently counters Hobbes's absolutist positions, even as he did the quaint formula of Filmer that kingship is inherited from Adam. He must have had Spinoza's Single Tax in view when he wrote his chapter on Property. He starts dutifully with the premise that God "hath given the world to men in common," and then proceeds to explain that it was given "to the use of the industrious and rational," who had a right to his labour, and by that made land valuable, greatly increasing its power to sustain life. For the rest, the philosopher "dare boldly affirm" that the rule "that every man should have as much as he could make use of would still hold in the world without straitening anybody; since there is land enough in the world to suffice double the inhabitants had not the invention of money, and the tacit agreement of men to put a value on it, introduced (by consent) larger possessions and a right to them." There he leaves the matter; but he soothed his conscience by believing that all taxation does fall ultimately on land, wheresoever it may be imposed.[3]

On ethics in general Locke goes to work as he does on the mind in general, applying to all judgments alike his negation of innate ideas; and the general effect of that polemic is not easily to be

[1] *Spinoza, his Life and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. 1899, p. 331.
[2] *Two Treatises*, ed. 1824, p. 172. Locke cites one passage from Hooker twice over—pp. 185, 196—as a footnote.
[3] *On Lowering of Interest*, Murray's rep. pp. 256, 258, 261.

over-rated. It remains the dynamic part of Locke's philosophy, his theism being in comparison inert. Shaftesbury, whose own obtrusion of theism left him small right of protest, reacted violently against his old tutor's doctrine that morality is finally determined by the will of God; but Locke's way of positing that idea, taken in connection with his whole treatment of innate ideas and of revelation, is very suggestive as to the amount of real rationalism which may have underlain it in scholastic times. The logical outcome of Locke's treatment of moral ideas is that morality is evolved by and in the course of nature. The function of God in his system is to supply the rewards and punishments that are assumed to be necessary to control men's conduct.[1] There is really no such support in Locke as there is in Hume for an 'intuitional' view. "Moral principles," he says at his outset on that topic, "require reasoning and discourse, and some exercise of the mind, to discover the certainty of their truth."[2] And again: "Moral rules need a proof, ergo, not innate.....Should that most unshakeable rule of morality and foundation of all social virtue, 'that one should do as he would be done unto,' be proposed to one who never heard of it before, but yet is of capacity to understand its meaning, might he not without any absurdity ask a reason why?"[3]

Here there is no opening for a thesis of either eternal fitness of things or innate moral sense. When Locke goes on to say that

> "several moral rules may receive from mankind a very general approbation, without either *knowing or admitting the true ground of morality*, which can only be the true law of a God, who sees men in the dark, has in his hand rewards and punishments, and power enough to call to account the proudest offender,"

he is imposing a logically extraneous dogma which in no way affects his organic doctrine. "For," he goes on,

> "God having, *by an inseparable connection*, joined virtue and *public* happiness together, and made the practice thereof necessary to the preservation of society, and visibly beneficial to all with whom the virtuous man has to do, it is no wonder that *every* one should not only allow but recommend and magnify those rules to others, *from whose observance of them he is sure to reap advantage to himself*."[4]

Here the limitation of "*several* moral rules" is withdrawn, and all moral rules are indicated as discoverable by sheer self-interest. The

[1] *Essay*, bk. ii, ch. 28, §§ 6, 8.
[2] *Essay*, bk. i, ch. 3, § 1.
[3] *Id.* § 4.
[4] *Id.* § 6.

Golden Rule is not excepted. All that Locke does by his theology, then, is to indicate that he is not an atheist, and believes in future punishments. He is simply giving the God of his belief something to do; and Shaftesbury, who treated the notion of rewards and punishments as a partial degradation of the moral instinct, ought to have put to himself the question whether, apart from that, Locke was not, like himself, simply identifying God with the order of Nature.

Locke very definitely discounts his own theism and his belief in future punishments immediately afterwards by instancing the Mingrelians, "a people professing Christianity" who "bury their children alive without scruple," and noting that "the virtues whereby the Tououpinambos *believed they merited paradise* were revenge and eating an abundance of their enemies. They have not so much as a name for a God, and have no religion, no worship."[1] His Latin citation from Baumgarten as to the practices of Moslem saints in Egypt (which partly holds true in the case of mere 'strong men' in Egypt to-day) is in effect a proposition that religion can mean the negation of all ordinary moral checks. Against all this, his theism and his Christianity counted logically for nothing unless he could show that there were grounds for believing Christianity to be a revelation in a sense in which no other religion was; and this his REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY does not pretend to do. Its very title is a step to rationalism. Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, argued with substantial justice that Locke's doctrine of ideas and his view of certainty left him no ground for his professed acceptance of unintelligible Christian mysteries; and the same argument holds as regards his ethics. Stillingfleet's polemic only helped to make Locke's ESSAY bear the sooner the fruit it was fitted to bear in promoting rationalistic deism; and such fruit it must also have borne on the ethical side.

Locke is, in fact, the first moralist to bring anthropology to bear directly on ethical science; and to argue (as his commentators have not unjustifiably done) that he accepted too readily the statements of travellers as to the absence of 'religion' and God-ideas among savages[2] is really nothing to the purpose here. Grant them their case, and the argument for the anthropocentric, conditioned, and progressive nature of morals is all the stronger. Men who assimilated the evidence and the argument were left without any evidential reason

[1] *Id.* § 9. Locke returns to the point on the question of innate ideas of God; bk. i, ch. iv, 8; bk. iv, ch. x, § 6. Here he in effect maintains that the God-idea is attainable without revelation.

[2] As to this see *Short Hist. of Freethought*, 3rd ed. i, 30 *sq.*

for connecting their ethical science with theism or religion at all, save inasmuch as they saw that ethic varied *with* religion. Locke's repeated profession of belief in revelation, however sincere, amounted philosophically only to a restatement of the scholastic doctrine of 'twofold truth,' which in scholastic hands was simply self-protection against persecution. And Locke had none the less reason to seek such protection,[1] though he, like Spinoza, remained under the control of inherited and instilled religious ideas which had no logical place in his philosophy.

Sidgwick's account of Locke's position is somewhat confused. "Locke's ethical opinions," he writes,[2] "have been widely misunderstood, since from a confusion between 'innate ideas' and 'intuitions,' which has been common in recent ethical discussion, it has been supposed that the founder of English empiricism must necessarily have been hostile to 'intuitional' ethics. But this is a complete misapprehension, so far as the determination of moral rules is concerned, *though it is no doubt true that* Locke rejects the view that the mere apprehension by the reason of the obligatoriness of certain rules is, or ought to be, a sufficient motive to their performance, apart from the foreseen consequences to the individual of observing or neglecting them. *He agrees, in fact, with Hobbes* in interpreting 'good' and 'evil' as 'nothing but pleasure and pain or that which occasions or procures pleasure and pain';[3] and he defines 'moral good and evil' as 'only the conformity or disagreement of our voluntary actions to some law whereby good and evil is drawn on us from the will and power of the lawmaker.'[4] But nonetheless he agrees entirely with Hobbes's opponents in holding ethical rules to be actually obligatory independently of political society,[5] and capable of being scientifically constructed on principles intuitively known, though he does not regard these principles as implanted in the human mind at birth."

But Hobbes also regarded moral rules as thus deducible: the difference between him and Locke is simply in respect of Hobbes's resort to law as the only power capable of deciding moral controversies. To oppose Hobbes on that head was not to be an intuitionist. By Sidgwick's account, in the last two clauses cited, Hobbes himself might be reckoned an intuitionist. "Intuitively known" sets up a misconception, covering as it does alike the ideas of 'instinctive moral sense' and 'rational recognition of fitness or propriety.'

Locke, it should be observed, never attempted to apply or develop his proposition that the idea of an infinitely good Supreme Being might be made to yield a system that would

[1] Compare *An Account of Mr. Locke's Religion* (anon.—by John Milner, B.D.), 1700.
[2] *Outlines*, p. 175.
[3] Essay, bk. ii, ch. 20, § 2. Cp. ch. 21, §§ 41–43.
[4] *Id.* bk. ii, ch. 28, § 5. Cp. § 6.
[5] *Id.* bk. i, ch. iii, § 5.

place morality "among the sciences capable of demonstration."[1] He leaves standing his "*three* laws, the rules of moral good and evil"—to wit, "the law of God, the law of politic societies, and the law of fashion,"[2] though he calls the first "the only true touchstone of moral rectitude."[3] And when Molyneux had repeatedly pressed him to develop a system of ethics, he pleaded (1696) age and ill health, adding that "the Gospel contains so perfect a body of ethics that reason may be excused from that inquiry"—this being, he further adds, "the excuse.....of one .....who thinks he may perhaps, with more profit to himself, employ the little time and strength he has in other researches, wherein he finds himself more in the dark."[4] He had found that "he that follows truth impartially seldom pleases any set of men."[5]

Especially clear is Locke's place in the naturalistic line of thinkers in respect of his independent rebuttal of the doctrine of free-will.[6] It is in some respects the best reasoned of the three outstanding performances on the topic up to that date, Hobbes's and Spinoza's being the others. And partly to Locke's credit may be set the still more thorough demonstration by his friend Anthony Collins, A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN LIBERTY (1715). Naturally both incurred on the score of their doctrine on this head a full share of the vituperation which to this day is the gist of the criticism bestowed upon it by the critics who have failed to understand it, and even by some who apparently do. But Locke's influence was not thereby checked in its growth. Soon he became for England her chief and typical philosopher; and it is his fundamental utilitarianism, with the theological addendum of a God who rewards and punishes, that gives the cue to the theological utilitarianism which emerges in the next generation and culminates in Paley.

[1] Bk. iv, ch. 3, § 18. [2] Bk. ii, ch. 28, § 13. [3] Bk. ii, ch. 28, § 8.
[4] *Some Familiar Letters between Mr. Locke and Several of His Friends*, 1708, p. 14 (*Works*, ed. 1714, iii, 546). [5] *Id.* p. 195.
[6] *Essay*, bk. ii, ch. 21, § 14 *sq.*

Chapter V

FROM CLARKE TO BUTLER

§ 1. *Clarke.*

The main movement of moral philosophy, which, after Spinoza, reverted to England in the person of Locke, continued to centre in the British Isles for half a century, Scotland after the Union contributing a noteworthy share. In England it was conducted both on theological and on rationalistic lines, with a constant drift towards naturalism. The ferment aroused by Hobbes and the newly-diffused spirit of freethinking is seen in the orthodox reaction marked by the Boyle Lectures; and it was under that auspices that Dr. Samuel Clarke gave a course on "The Unchangeable[1] Obligations of Natural Religion and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion" (published in 1706), wherein he undertakes to show, in the way of Cumberland, that there are certain primary moral laws so plainly deducible from the nature of things that to deny their existence is like denying the existence of the sun or refusing to recognize the first principles of geometry. Clarke indeed at one point explains uneasily that "the same demonstrative force of reasoning and even mathematical certainty" which was "easy to be obtained" in his Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God (1705) must not be looked for here; but he proceeds nevertheless to insist that from the relations of human beings there arise "a fitness and unfitness of certain manners of behaviour of some persons towards others," which "is as manifest as that the properties which flow from the essences of different mathematical figures have different congruities or incongruities between themselves."[2] This language, upon deflation, yields the propositions that it is more "fit" (1) that men should be assisting than that they should be destroying each other; (2) that they should observe justice and equity than that they should unscrupulously disappoint each other's reasonable expectations; and (3) that I should preserve or succour an innocent man who comes within my power than that I should kill him or let him perish "without any reason or provocation at all."[3]

To this kind of demonstration Clarke prefaces what he takes to

[1] So on the title-page; "unalterable" in the text. [2] *Id.* p. 37. [3] *Id.* pp. 38-39.

be a convincing series of assertions about the plans of the Deity. It includes the remarkable admission that, though the world was so created by Omnipotence that right-doing *tends* to make all creatures happy (and *vice versa*), yet "through some great and general corruption and depravation (whencesoever that may have arisen).....the natural order of things in this world is in event manifestly perverted, and Virtue and Goodness are visibly *prevented in great measure from obtaining their proper and due effects*....."[1] It would seem hard on Cumberland to suppose that Clarke could improve upon him; but at this particular point the latter does seem to have learned a fuller measure of circumspection than was shown by his precursor. He goes on to explain, in the same expansive style and with the same certitude, that the Deity cannot conceivably let things go on forever in this fashion, and must certainly intend, for his own credit, "such a future state of existence.....as that, by an exact distribution of rewards and punishments therein, all the present disorders and inequalities may be *set right*."[2] Yet among the indisputably "fit" things is included an arrangement which, if provided, would have made this unnecessary. "It is a thing evidently and infinitely more fit that any one particular innocent and good being should by the Supreme Ruler and Disposer of all things be placed and preserved in an easy and happy estate than that without any fault or demerit of his own it should be made extremely, remedilessly, and endlessly miserable."[3] The adverbs cannot disguise the fact that the Supreme Ruler has now been convicted of doing something more or less infinitely unfit in leaving virtue unrewarded and vice unpunished until an indefinitely distant judgment day.

All the same, the obvious fitness of right conduct in all circumstances imposes an obligation upon all men to do the right thing "even separate from the consideration of these rules being the positive will or command of God, and also antecedent to any respect or regard, expectation or apprehension, of any particular private and personal advantage or disadvantage, reward or punishment, *either present or future*."[4] And yet, while this obligation to right action lies so obviously upon all men, the perverse deist is called upon to take note "how little use men generally are *able* to make of the light of reason," to "discover" the obligations of natural religion, or to "convince themselves effectually" of the certainty and importance of a future state of rewards and punishments.[5] The irresistibly obvious nature of moral obligation deducible from the nature of

[1] *Id.* p. 7. [2] *Id.* p. 8. [3] *Id.* p. 38. [4] *Id.* p. 36. [5] *Id.* p. 29.

things is "so notoriously plain and evident that nothing but the extremest stupidity of mind, corruption of manners, or perversion of spirit can possibly make man entertain the least doubt concerning them."[1] Yet men in general are but little able to "discover" the notoriously obvious, or to use the light of reason at all.

Thus it was that a probable majority of the theologians of that age faced the vast problem of evil in human affairs. The law of right and wrong, they declared, was obvious; and God had implanted in all men the power to see and know it. What, then, explained the eternal strife of wills on moral issues; the wars waged by the votaries of clashing creeds; the civil wars, in which each side claimed to be God's side; the savage persecutions in God's name; the infliction of death by torture for difference of belief; the furious and endless battles of political factions over new laws, to say nothing of the everlasting tide of crime and private sin? What was, for instance, the decision of eternal and immutable moral law as to the succession to the throne of England? To the general question the theological moralist answered, as we have seen, that men were 'blind' to the obvious, and largely incapable of discovering the self-evident. The plain theological inference seemed to be either that God had at once made moral truth obvious and rendered most of his creatures incapable of seeing it, or that there were two Gods, mutually frustrative. And the latter solution was in practice much resorted to, "Satan" furnishing the solution of the moral dilemma for multitudes, though the professed moralists were shy of the device. Sir Thomas Browne, protesting against the sway of mere authority and indicting the credulities of tradition, affirmed the existence and providential activity of Satan as confidently as he did that of God.[2] Between religious and psychological self-contradiction, moral philosophy was mainly an arena of vociferation and aspersion.

Of such a theological ethic Clarke was long the accredited mouthpiece in the orthodox world. To reason he paid inexpensive tribute in the declaration that to refuse the law of reciprocity was on a par with saying that two and two made five; to religion at the same time he rendered due allegiance by 'demonstrating' that the pestilent people who cannot see the certainty of immortality and

[1] *Id.* p. 39.

[2] *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (or *Vulgar Errors*), 1646, bk. i, chs. 10, 11. It may be well to call attention here to an error of the press in ch. 11, end of third last par. which occurs in all the early editions, and, though corrected in that of Wilkins (Bohn. ed. i, 92), is preserved in that of Mr. Sayle. The text says of the fiends that, "although they deceive us, they lie unto each other." The context plainly requires "lie *not* unto each other," for it goes on: "as well understanding that all community is continued by truth, and that of hell cannot consist without it."

the truth of the Christian religion cannot have any proper ideas of morality. The treatise accordingly runs to edifying vituperation of Hobbes,[1] of the deists in general[2] as being at their very best men who will not yield to the most convincing reasoning, and of "the vain arguing of certain vitious and profane men, who, merely on account of their incredulity, would be thought to be strict adherers of reason."[3]

In a word, Clarke is at once the most sonorous and the most empty of all the English writers on ethics in the historical line. Since he is now abandoned by Christian historians of ethics as a sheer dogmatist,[4] he calls for no notice save as a historical phenomenon in his day. No more than Cumberland had he any idea of reducing his abstract declamation to a study of the concrete problems of right and wrong of his own or any other day.[5] He was destined to be made to serve towards the spread of a theological utilitarianism which ultimately, in the hands of Paley, served to prepare the ground for the non-theological utilitarianism of the age of Bentham and the Mills. Twenty years after the issue of his Boyle Lectures another of his name, John Clarke, master of the Hull Grammar School, gravely pointed out that Samuel's doctrine of an 'obligation' to do good irrespective of the command of God or of any reward or punishment took away those 'foundations of morality' which he had undertaken to lay. Why, asked the schoolmaster, should any man regard that as good which brought him neither pleasure nor benefit? "What sense can the words 'fit' and 'reasonable' have in this use or application of them?"[6] John Clarke, for his part, was satisfied that "all morality, all the Laws of Nature, are founded entirely upon the considerations of pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, or the tendency of human conduct to one or the other.....To assert the contrary is to unhinge morality, contradict nature, and leave mankind in a state of darkness wherein it will be forever impossible for them to know what to do.....In this tendency *therefore* precisely consists the moral good and evil of human notions; *that is, their agreeableness or disagreeableness to the will of God.*"[7]

And John Clarke, who thus turned the labours of Samuel to the establishment of a utilitarian doctrine in which 'God' could be read 'constitution of Nature' without spoiling the argument save as regards a future state, was in turn unwittingly subservient to the progress of a utilitarianism which saw in future rewards and punishments a no less unnecessary than

[1] P. 40 *sq.* [2] Pp. 15–35. [3] *Id.* p. 3.
[4] Prof. T. C. Hall, *History of Ethics within Organized Christianity*, 1910, p. 457, *note.*
[5] Cp. p. 45.
[6] *The Foundation of Morality in Theory and Practice Considered*, n.d. (? 1726), pp. 19 *sq.*
[7] *Id.* pp. 16–17.

improbable addition to those pains and pleasures which the theological utilitarian had recognized as the marks of natural morals. But that was a slower process. Concerning Samuel Clarke, Whewell[1] notes "how the irremediable vagueness and emptiness of the Clarkian notion of Fit and Right, as apprehended by Reason alone, was driving his followers to lean upon an object to which this fitness was subservient—namely, the happiness of rational agents. The conception of future rewards and punishments, being in a way definite and upheld by the craving for immortality, held its ground longer; and only in the century of scientific Naturalism was it fully discredited as an ethical principle.

The discussion originated by Samuel Clarke, it should be noted, ramified widely in the generation after him. *Three* John Clarkes took part in it. One, John Clarke of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, joined with John Clarke, Dean of Sarum, brother of Samuel, in defending Samuel's system against the criticism of Edmund Law of Cambridge, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle, in his treatise prefixed to his translation of Archbishop King's DE ORIGINE MALI (1731). John Clarke of Hull was the third. Many other writers discussed ethical problems in the age of Walpole; there was in fact more debate of the kind in that age than had ever before occurred, or than was maintained in the second half of the century.[2] Law thought that morals had been reduced to a science by King, and by his own notes and Gay's treatise prefixed to his translation.[3] This was hardly so, but all the main elements of modern ethical theory, save the principle of evolution, had been posited and discussed by British writers between 1690 and 1750 before Paley came out on the side of theological utilitarianism.

§ 2. *Shaftesbury.*

At the point where moral science had seemed to be slipping back into the hands of theological rhetoricians there begins a new intellectual movement of cumulative importance. From the side of rationalistic deism the Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713) had preceded Clarke with his youthful INQUIRY CONCERNING VIRTUE AND MERIT (first issued without permission, 1699; republished in the CHARACTERISTICS, 1711), a treatise in part obviously derived from the ETHICA of Spinoza. Shaftesbury, like Spinoza, makes his ethic formally cosmic, but really homocentric, the hiatus between his theism and his ethic being even greater than it is in the case of

[1] *Lectures*, p. 150.

[2] See a number of references in W. R. Scott's *Francis Hutcheson*, 1900, pp. 102–9; and in Whewell's *Lectures on the Hist. of Moral Philos.* ed. 1862, Lect. vi–x.

[3] *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, 6th ed. 1774, pp. 253–54, *note*.

Spinoza. At the outset he postulates on the one hand a necessary rightness in all things, on the ground that a good Supreme Being cannot have constituted anything *wholly* ill (that is, ill relatively to the whole) in his creation. At the very outset, however, the system stumbles, since the qualifying term allows that some or all things in the human relation may *there* be ill. Spinoza had safeguarded his theism or pantheism at this point by noting that for the Infinite good and evil are non-significant. Shaftesbury does not accept this, being concerned to regard the Infinite as "wholly good." The result is that his theism has no explanation of evil, while he insists that we cannot do without the God-idea.

God being thus placed as an ideal figure-head, the Cause and Ruler of all things, men have to settle for themselves what is good and evil, taking for granted that what they decide is agreeable to God's will. In his correspondence, however, Shaftesbury constantly talks of Providence as controlling events in general; and resignation to God's will is for him as for most religionists the main aspect of 'piety.' Like theists in general, nevertheless, he repugns actively against whatever conduct he feels to be evil. As this conduct must happen, *ex definitione*, by God's will, his system is on that side completely involved in the eternal theistic dilemma. He actively resents Locke's reference of the moral constitution of things to the will of God. "If the mere will, decree, or law of God be said absolutely to constitute right and wrong, then are these latter words of no significancy at all."[1] It does not occur to him that to give any significancy to his theism he ought to coincide with Locke in some fashion by making God impose on his creation the conditions under which morality is determined. If morality is deducible from the nature of things, it is, theistically speaking, God-ordained, and men's propensities likewise. Shaftesbury explains that "to the existence of the spider the fly is absolutely necessary."[2] On the other hand, he asserts[3] that "the wrong or false imagination of right and wrong.....can proceed only from the force of *custom* and education in opposition to *Nature*." Yet he had before written[4] that "if one of those creatures *supposed* to be by nature tame, gentle, and favourable to mankind, be, *contrary to his natural constitution*, fierce and savage, we instantly remark the breach of temper, and own the creature to be *unnatural and corrupt*." Here there can be no question of custom and education; yet there is no

[1] *Inquiry*, bk. i, pt. iii, § 2. Cp. in his letter to Ainsworth (*Letters*, ed. 1746, p. 8), that in which he speaks of "our sacred legislator," and that in which (p. 32 *sq.*) he denounces Locke as making our moral ideas "unnatural."

[2] *Id.* pt. i, § 2.

[3] *Id.* pt. iii, § 2.

[4] *Id.* pt. ii, § 2.

explanation of how a creature incapable of perversion by either can be "in opposition to Nature."

All that emerges from Shaftesbury's cosmism is that things in general are designed to go in certain ways, spiders blamelessly catching flies, and cows being normally friendly to man, while dogs are partly so, and tigers entirely the reverse. If courage be "contrary to the economy" of an animal (*e.g.*, a sheep), it is "therefore vicious."[1] Men, on the other hand, are designed to be good to each other in all ways, and, if any one is otherwise, he, like the curst cow, is in opposition to Nature. A large part at least of human life is thus so constituted, by implication, against the will of God, who has so formed everybody that all know they make themselves disliked by evil deeds. To call Shaftesbury an optimist, then, as was generally done in the eighteenth century, is to be content with a very lame vindication of the scheme of things, and to miss seeing that his philosophy really needs a Deity of Evil, a God of the Unnatural, to explain the real course of things.

His so-called optimism consists merely, on the one hand, in his formal position that nothing can be "wholly ill" in a universe constituted by a good Supreme Being, and, on the other hand, in his insistence, after the fashions of Cumberland and the Stoics, on the clear 'fitness' of right conduct as tending at once to private and public good. It was partly on this side that he clashed with the theologians. The part played in English history on the one side by persecuting and turbulent Puritans, and on the other by turbulent and persecuting Anglicans (to say nothing of the crimes of Catholicism), had given him a strong distaste alike for "enthusiasm" (the eighteenth-century name for fanaticism) and priestly pretensions; and his constant profession of 'Christianity' is even less touched than Locke's with orthodox evangelicalism. For the average clergyman, both figured as mere deists. Shaftesbury, indeed, while carrying his rejection of Locke's foundation of morals on God's will to a censure of the further resting of it on future rewards and punishments, made the concession that the firm belief in a future life could usefully concur with a true regard to virtue, though a weak belief could only do harm.[2] As regards atheism, while he argued that it need not unfit a man for the perception of right and wrong, he pronounces that its "natural tendency" is bad. The conclusion is that Virtue is "not complete, but in" Piety; "and thus the perfection and height of Virtue must be owing to the belief

[1] Bk. ii, pt. i, § 3.

[2] Bk. i, pt. iii, § 3.

of a God"—one of his many formal coincidences with Spinoza.[1] Yet, though he approves of an Established Church as being non-enthusiastic, never does he found-on or point to revelation as either a necessary or a useful complement to the 'moral sense' which he is the first to posit under that name,[2] or the reason which either applies or regulates or develops that sense.

It is only in his humanist doctrine that Shaftesbury is at all systematic, and there he is only imperfectly so. Virtue or merit, he realizes, "is allowed to man only," and begins when the moral inclinations or passions are brought under reflection, which is a "reflected sense." To a large extent, nevertheless, he conceives moral judgment as he does æsthetic. "The case is the same in the mental or moral subjects as in the ordinary bodies or objects of sense."[3] The mind "discerns the good or ill towards the species or public"; "and in this case alone it is we call any creature worthy or virtuous, when it can have the notion of a public interest, and can attain the *speculation or science* of what is morally good or ill, admirable or blamable, right or wrong." This means that there may be mistakes; and moral mistakes may mean vicious action. A slight mistake does not take away

> "the character of a virtuous or worthy man. But when, either through superstition or ill-custom, there come to be very gross mistakes in the assignment or application of the affections," so that "a creature cannot well live in a natural state, nor with due affections, compatible with human society and civil life, then is the character of virtue forfeited. And thus we find how far worth and virtue *depend* on a *knowledge* of right and wrong, and on a use of *reason*, sufficient to secure a right application of the affections."

So that the "eternal measures and immutable independent nature of worth and virtue"[4] are for Shaftesbury, as for Cudworth and Cumberland and Clarke, matters of intellectual cognition as such.[5] He is thus in complete practical agreement with Locke, and all his erroneous "immutable" apparatus is irrelevant to his theorem. Morality, the art of conduct, is as much a matter of study and development as the art of painting, the moral sense and the æsthetic sense being alike subject to error of ignorance, of bias or taste, of custom, and of education. And one of the fundamental difficulties of scientific ethics is indicated by the confident blundering of

[1] *Id.* end. Cp. Spinoza, *Ethica*, pars iv, prop. 28.
[2] *Inquiry*, bk. i, pt. iii, § 2, and previously in the marginal headings.
[3] Bk. i, pt. ii, § 3.
[4] *Id.* end.
[5] Cp. *Advice to an Author*, pt. i, § 3, beginning (*Characteristics*, ed. 1900, i, 124–25).

Shaftesbury in regard to æsthetics. Not only was his range of taste modish and straitened, leaving him unable to admire St. Paul's Cathedral or to appreciate Shakespeare, save as a moral teacher; he absolutely vetoed in painting the essential artistic purpose of beauty or charm of colour, making its whole function didactic.[1] He is thus as far didactically astray about art as was Plato, the literary-artistic sage.

True, he had the gift for morals which he lacked for art; and there he had the wisdom to prescribe for himself and others a perpetual gymnastic,[2] a continual inquest upon bias, inconsistency, and passion within ourselves. This teaching really pervades his work to a far greater extent than optimism or cosmism, and is, in fact, a cancelment of the former. To the incoherent Monism of his first book he appends, again without philosophic solution, a "chief principle of philosophy," a "doctrine of two persons in one individual self."[3] It is in this connection that he gives his informal assent to the principle of determinism, avowing that, "let Will be ever so free, Humour and Fancy govern it";[4] and again: "Appetite, which is elder brother to Reason, being the lad of stronger growth, is sure, on every contest, to take the advantage of drawing all to his own side. And Will, so highly boasted, is at best merely a top or football between these youngsters....."[5] Shaftesbury thus, in despite of his irrelevant cosmic optimism and his private providentialism, leans to the scientific side; and if he had been able to carry on the "speculation or science of what is morally good or ill" as he prescribed, he would have been even a more considerable thinker than he was.

As it is, he is to be credited with an intelligent and independent effort towards sound sociological conceptions as guides to moral judgment. Like all the effective thinkers, he had a keen interest in the public and political life of his own day. One of the conflicting pairs of tendency in him (avowed in his theory of double personality) was the disposition to prescribe (illogically enough) and to practise a humorous method in the exposure of fanaticism, and, at the same time, to resent angrily such practice on the part of others. Thus he privately calls Lucian an impious "wretch," and Swift's TALE OF A TUB "detestable."[6] But he is one of the first to put as an item of social science the operation of the economic factor in

[1] *Notion* and *Letter* at end of *Characteristics*, 1713 ed. Cp. *Pioneer Humanists*, p. 226.
[2] *Advice to an Author, passim.*
[3] *Id.* pt. i, § 2.
[4] *Id. ib.* ed. 1900, p. 122.
[5] *Id.* p. 123.
[6] Letters cited in the present writer's *Pioneer Humanists*, pp. 196, 225.

religious evolution;[1] and his study of the associative principle in man is not only an effective answer to what was fallacious in Hobbes, but a lead to modern sociology.[2] It was in virtue of this vein of sound criticism of life, as well as of what was for his own age a charming style and a fine amenity of tone and manner, that Shaftesbury won his wide influence, which outwent and outlasted that of Clarke on the one hand, and that of his own follower and developer, Hutcheson, on the other. In Germany the so-called optimism of Shaftesbury actually eclipsed the explicit optimism of Leibnitz; and his teaching affected the later development of ethics there as in England.

What is ultimately dissatisfying in his work is the attempt to put a cosmo-theistic aspect of 'good' on the totality of things, alongside of the explicit and implicit avowal that what is not good in the human sense can have no goodness for us in a non-human. The practical irrelevance is as pronounced as the philosophic. Shaftesbury lived in a world convulsed by strife, with nations for ever at the grapple, and parties within each battling nation lusting for each other's ruin. If he had been asked why he, who repined in death because France was not sufficiently crushed at the Peace of Utrecht, and because a detestable priest was the means of defeating the Whigs at an election, yet insisted that nothing was ill relatively to the All, or what that formula could mean to any one, he would have been much at a loss to justify both mental attitudes. In his own age the formal optimism evoked not merely clerical protest but lay derision; and, amenity apart, the derision has a lasting application.

It is well, however, in judging the inconsistencies and inadequacies of Shaftesbury, to remember not only that no philosopher has ever been found to escape such a charge, but that the author of the CHARACTERISTICS carried a heavy physical burden. His INQUIRY, said to have been drafted when he was twenty, is a very notable performance even for a youth of twenty-seven, which was his age when it was published. And his whole life, from twenty to his death at the age of forty-two, was weighted on one side by political preoccupations and on the other by weak health. Like Locke, he was a martyr to asthma; and suffering as well as other constraint underlies the as-it-were hothouse atmosphere of his later treatises, THE MORALISTS and MISCELLANEOUS REFLECTIONS. The PHILOSOPHICAL REGIMEN (called by Shaftesbury *Askemata* or "Exercises"), discovered and published in our own day by

[1] *Essay on Wit and Humour*, pt. iii, ch. 2.
[2] Cp. the author's *Evolution of States*, pp. 5–6.

Dr. Benjamin Rand, furnishes a very convincing proof of the sincerity with which the invalid strove in his private life to live up to the refined Stoicism which he prescribes. But the explosive letters remain the more interesting reading.

§ 3. *Mandeville.*

A rude corrective to the dulcet intonations of the peer is yielded by the miscellanies of Dr. Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733)—a London physician of French descent and Dutch schooling, who wrote a vigorously idiomatic English, as readable still as anything of that age. In 1705 he published a short fable in Hudibrastic verse, called THE GRUMBLING HIVE, which he republished with comments in 1714, giving the whole the title of THE FABLE OF THE BEES; to this were added new essays in a re-issue in 1723; and a Second Part, consisting of dialogues, in 1729. In 1720 he had issued FREE THOUGHTS ON RELIGION, THE CHURCH, AND NATIONAL HAPPINESS. In 1732 followed a new set of dialogues entitled "An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of Christianity in War." Others of his works deal with medical matters; throughout those named there recurs a criticism of life which, if that of Shaftesbury be reckoned optimistic, may be termed pessimistic, though it in no way indicates disrelish for living. Its pessimism lies in a conception of morals and society in which the primary principle of Hobbes is stressed and developed, to the end of proving that society, progress, and prosperity are the results not of benevolence but of self-seeking. That is the burden of THE GRUMBLING HIVE, a lively allegory of a beehive where avarice, luxury, fraud and ambition promoted wealth, power, arts and population; until the common and hypocritical outcry against fraud drove Jove to declare that he would rid the hive of that factor. The result was that all turned to the simple life, values fell, production dwindled with falling demand, foreign power declined with domestic productivity, and population rapidly decayed, until the survivors

> Flew into a hollow tree
> Blest with content and honesty.

This is the kernel of the paradox of the sub-title, "Private Vices Public Benefits," upon which animadversion in general turned.

To criticize such a doctrine with an eye to consistency is idle: we are dealing with a whimsical though keen-sighted humorist, whose gift is to look at life as it is in the mass when decent dissimulations and higher yearnings, the veils of propriety and the

radiance of sporadic goodness, are alike stripped off. Shaftesbury had in a manner called the chessboard white; Mandeville calls it black. "One of the great reasons why so few people understand themselves," he writes in the introduction to the book of 1714, "is that most writers are always teaching men what they should be, and hardly ever trouble their heads with telling them what they really are." In the "Search into the Nature of Society," added in 1723, he sets out with a grimly ironical challenge to Shaftesbury:—

> "The generality of moralists and philosophers have hitherto agreed that there could be no virtue without self-denial;[1] but a late author, who is now much read by men of sense, is of a contrary opinion, and imagines that men, without any trouble or violence upon themselves, may be naturally virtuous. He seems to require and expect goodness in his species, as we do a sweet taste in grapes and China oranges, of which, if any of them are sour, we boldly pronounce that they are not come to that perfection their nature is capable of. This noble writer (for it is the Lord Shaftesbury I mean, in his Characteristics) fancies that as a man is made for society so he ought to be born with a kind affection to the whole of which he is a part, and a propensity to seek the welfare of it. In pursuance of this supposition he calls every action performed with regard to the public good Virtuous; and all selfishness, wholly excluding such a regard, Vice. In respect to our species he looks upon virtue and vice as permanent realities, that must ever be the same in all countries and all ages, and imagines that a man of sound understanding, by following the rules of good sense, may not only find out that *pulchrum et honestum* both in morality and in the works of art and nature, but likewise govern himself, by his reason, with as much ease and readiness as a good rider manages a well-taught horse by the bridle. The attentive reader.....will soon perceive that two systems cannot be more opposite than his lordship's and mine. His notions, I confess, are generous and refined; they are a high compliment to human-kind, and capable, by a little enthusiasm, of inspiring us with the most noble sentiments concerning the dignity of our exalted nature. What a pity it is that they are not true."

And in his vivid though unsystematic way Mandeville proceeds to maintain

> "not only that the good and amiable qualities of man are not those that make him beyond other animals a sociable creature; but, moreover, that it would be utterly impossible either to raise any multitudes into a populous, rich, and flourishing nation, or, when so raised, to keep and maintain them in that

[1] A point upon which Shaftesbury had hesitated.

condition, without the assistance of what we call Evil, both natural and moral."

This does not exactly mean what it seems to say. As Mandeville's 'vices' are not what are now commonly so called, but the old theological vices, including pride, ambition, envy, luxury, ostentation, and self-seeking (all of which he justly maintains promote industry and enterprise), so his 'Evil' is not sheer wickedness, but all the pressures put by inclement nature on man in general, as well as those which men put upon each other by their clashing egoisms, and all the desires which rouse them to activity. Evil produces good, he points out, when the burning of a city gives work to hosts of artisans; and much of trade consists in merely replacing what is lost by flood, fire, and storm. On the other hand, sheer cold has driven men into house-building and the use of clothing. He is in fact anticipating the later scientific doctrine that it is the struggle for survival that forces invention and improvement. But he insists, in a fashion that might almost have made Hobbes demur, that all the social or gregarious instincts are self-regarding, and that disinterested benevolence is a chimera.

There is so much scientific penetration in Mandeville's pessimism that it could be wished he had been less of a humorist with a *parti pris*, and had been more coolly concerned to reckon with all the factors. The element of presupposition, of wilful theory-making, really vitiates his so-called system (if we take it seriously), just as it does that of Shaftesbury in the other direction, dogmatic pessimism, in fact, being as irrelevant as optimism either to science or to daily life. On the one hand Mandeville argues that evil accrues to human activity both as conditioning and as following it; on the other hand he claims that it is constantly impelling men to betterment. London, he confidently predicts, must always have dirty streets while it has much traffic. On that head, happily, history confutes him, and he ought to have foreseen as much on his own principle. And the case is the same with moral evil, in theory.

His own didactics, in fact, take the sting from his theorem. No man in his day can have done much more than he to shame egoism, vilified as he is for 'vindicating' it. At heart he is just as much concerned as most other people about upright dealing, rational living, veracity and honesty, though he is ostensibly more appreciative of culture and good judgment. His worst position is his polemic against Charity Schools, to the effect that there must be people to do the dirty work, and the poor who have to do it will be happier if left uneducated, though they ought to be forced to go to

church for moral exhortation. On the other hand, he vigorously and wisely condemned public executions; he recoiled from the slaughter-house and the butcher's shop, and he seems to have been inclined on that score to be a vegetarian.[1] But his was only a partially scientific mind. At some points a sound and original economist, at others he was a very conventional and narrow one. His argument that 'honour' and valour are largely 'artificial' products, developed by social usage and legislation, has enough truth in it to be worth reducing to exactitude; and his thesis that vanity moves men to public service is in the same case. But he is first and last an ironical humorist, unsystematic and self-contradictory. Against his doctrine that the 'vices' promote progress stands his profession of preference for virtuous self-denial and the simple life. And though in his FREE THOUGHTS he has a notably acute and competent rebuttal of the doctrine of free-will, he makes his representative in the Dialogues of Part II of the FABLE protest that there was no predestination that "influenced the free-will of Adam."[2] In sum, he was a great sharpener of the wits of men who could read him with open minds and good judgments.

Alike on the orthodox and on the Liberal side, however, his inconsistencies alone received critical recognition. William Law, Berkeley, Hutcheson, and Hume, all cast darts at him. Law, who, with a keen eye for logical incongruity, had not a grain of humour in his being, and who was as vehement against the theatre as against Mandeville, fiercely arraigned his thesis on the score of a humorous phrase.[3] Berkeley attacks with his usual virulence against any semblance of freethinking.[4] Hume meets the doctrine that prosperity lives on vice by a common-sense demonstration that 'innocent' luxury promotes industry, putting the plain question:[5] Is it not possible for the people of Britain "to be happier, by the most perfect way of life that can be imagined, and by the greatest reformation that Omnipotence itself could work in their temper and disposition"? Remove the vices and you remove the evils; but, observe, you must remove *all* the vices—*sloth* as well as vicious luxury. "Let us therefore rest contented with asserting that two opposite vices in a state may be more advantageous than either of them alone. But let us never pronounce vice in itself advantageous." And then follows the swift thrust at Mandeville's self-contradiction: "Is it not very inconsistent for an author to assert in one page that moral distinctions are inventions of politicians for public interest, and in the next page

[1] Remark (P) on poem (line 201).
[2] Dialogue v.
[3] *Remarks upon a Late Book*, etc. 1725.
[4] *Alciphron*, Dial. ii.
[5] Essay: *Of Refinement in the Arts*, near end.

maintain that vice is advantageous to the public? Hutcheson had as little difficulty in cornering the fatalist's 'system' by showing that the thesis of the sub-title took in the book five different forms: that private vices *are* public benefits; that they *tend* to produce such benefits; that they may be *made* to tend so; that they are *consequences* of public well-being; and that they will probably flow from that by reason of the present corruption of men."[1]

The thesis was thus certainly disposed of as a philosopheme. But it was the fate of Hutcheson to show in turn that a very benevolent and serious philosopheme could be as unconsciously self-contradictory and as irrelevant to the problem of life as the humorous pessimism of Mandeville.

§ 4. *Hutcheson.*

Francis Hutcheson (1697–1746), grandson of a Scottish minister settled in Ulster, was educated at Glasgow University, and was Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow from 1730 till his death. He may thus be described as the first professional thinker in the modern line of ethical writers. A warm disciple of Shaftesbury, whom he partly systematized in his INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGINAL OF OUR IDEAS OF BEAUTY AND VIRTUE (1725; 3rd ed. 1729), he described that work on the title-page of the first edition as a defence of the CHARACTERISTICS against the FABLE OF THE BEES; and in point of fact he did run his ship under water as determinedly as Mandeville had done. Hutcheson's starting-point was the sound one that men approve of good actions without calculating their own interest; but the scope of this principle he greatly exaggerated. Where the fabulist reduced all morals to the codification of self-interest, thus explaining the variation of the codes, the moralist with equal pertinacity reduced them all to 'benevolence,' by which he meant 'disinterested' concern for the *collective* good, our own included. The world had now the edification of seeing Benevolence assigned as the explanation of human sacrifice, infanticide,[2] and the killing of the aged by savages, all social practices whatever being declared to be founded on an idea, however mistaken, of the general good,[3] which he identified with benevolence. That was his way of insisting on the universal possession of a Moral Sense (the principle which he took over from Shaftesbury) and the 'benevolent' constitution of the universe.

[1] *Thoughts on Laughter*, etc. ed. 1758, p. 58.

[2] Hutcheson finally hesitates over infanticide, which he thinks may be "perhaps practised and allowed from self-love"; while he thinks the aged may choose to be killed "in hopes of a future state." He rather resented anthropological evidence on such matters.

[3] *Inquiry*, pt. ii (*Moral Good and Evil*), sec. 4.

It will be observed that under the name of benevolence Hutcheson has really diagnosed the factor of regard to utility as commonly understood. To say that men practise human sacrifice because they believe it secures a common benefit, and infanticide because they see it relieves them from a burden and an affliction in time of famine, is to make an intelligible and obviously true statement. But to avow as a normal motive the pursuit of a utility *in which we share* would have been to make a partial surrender to the detested Mandeville, and to seem to exclude morality of motive from a large area of practice. Benevolence therefore remained the formula of the moral-sense theory, derived from the 'pagan' Shaftesbury, even while professedly Christian ethic was on the way to an egoistic utilitarianism. The moral fervour with which Hutcheson is undoubtedly to be credited was the means of keeping his system formally unsound.

On the theistic side Hutcheson is as arbitrary as Shaftesbury, and he grows no warier as he proceeds. In his ILLUSTRATIONS UPON THE MORAL SENSE (1728), meeting the objection that the moral sense is 'not a rule,' he replies that "yet, by reflecting on it, understanding may find out a rule."[1] This seems plainly to concede that the moral sense is mere varying bias; and when he remarks that it is highly probable "the Deity also approves kind affections, otherwise he would not have implanted them in us, nor determined us by a moral sense to approve them," he is plainly on the horns of a dilemma. If kind affections are implanted in us, so are the unkind: are *they* then approved by the deity? For surely it must be confessed that many men approve of their own malice. The crux remains: if the moral sense, including as it thus does malicious propensities, must be regulated by the understanding, it is only another name for intuitive perception of some actions as objectionable, and of others as laudable.

At once, in Hutcheson's straightforward handling,[2] the doctrine of the Moral Sense is thus seen to have no explanatory importance, being merely a convenient name for the collective tendency to allow and disallow actions. When the actions are socially bad what has happened is simply a mistake: "the bad conduct is not owing to any irregularity in the moral sense, but to a wrong judgment or opinion."[3] To the last Hutcheson does not seem to have realized that if the moral sense is thus merely the expression of a social

[1] *Illustrations*, sec. iv.
[2] As to how he scandalized his fellow Presbyterians in youth by imposing an ideal of Benevolence on Christian theology see W. R. Scott's *Francis Hutcheson*, 1900, p. 20.
[3] *Inquiry*, 3rd ed. p. 207.

proclivity to praise and blame, which must constantly be controlled by reason to keep it from working evil, it is the reason that is the moralizing factor, and that *its* tests are those which determine morality. He is in fact a utilitarian irrelevantly concerned to vindicate the principle of a Benevolence divinely implanted in human nature. At the outset the Benevolence is limited to the tribe or community, and in the terms of the case is directed to the securing of the good of each one *in* the good of the whole. This is just Hobbes over again, under a new rubric. And though the practice of human sacrifice, to which Hutcheson expressly refers, is the proof that tribal ethic can mean a gross collective egoism as against the one victim, it never occurs to him that "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" (which he is the first thus to formulate[1]) must obviously be checked by other moral tests if it is not to become a form of systematic iniquity—as in tribal life it so often is. At best his school could argue that the moral sense is the corrective of the moral sense, which leaves the formula sufficiently dilapidated for cancelment as a scientific principle. Hutcheson's criterion of Virtue is essentially utilitarian (his theism being a merely formal addition predicating God as causing our moral inclinations and circumstances); and the whole utilitarian problem might have been cleared up in his day if it had been followed up with the same ratiocinative zest with which he propounded his thesis:—

> "In comparing the moral qualities of actions in order to regulate our election among various actions proposed, or to find which of them has the greatest moral excellency, we are led by our moral sense of virtue thus to judge, that in equal *degrees* of happiness expected to proceed from the action, the virtue is in proportion to the number of persons to whom the happiness shall extend (and here the dignity or moral importance of persons may compensate numbers); and in equal numbers the virtue is as the quantity of the happiness or natural good; or that the virtue is in a compound ratio of the quantity of good and numbers of enjoyers. And in the same manner the moral evil of vice is as the degree of misery and number of sufferers; so that that action is best which accomplishes the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers, and that worst which in like manner occasions misery."[2]

Here we have the germ of the "hedonistic calculus" of recent ethical discussion; and Hutcheson, doubtless stimulated by the

[1] The idea is of course much older. See Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, p. 274 *sq.*, as to the classic expressions of it. It is also fairly explicit in Cumberland.

[2] *Inquiry*, Treatise ii, sec. iii, § 8. Ed. 1729, pp. 179–80.

suggestions of Cumberland and Clarke, actually propounds an algebraic formula of the rightness of actions, and, by consequence, of virtue or merit. About the same time another moral calculus was propounded by another Scottish professor, Archibald Campbell of St. Andrew's, in his Αρετη Λογια.[1] But Campbell's calculus was one of pleasures, or personal advantages, whereas Hutcheson's was one of good to others; and Campbell, who had vilified Mandeville, was in turn charged with propounding "that hellish system of immorality which the fallen angels and ungodly men are governed by";[2] while Hutcheson termed the criterion of pleasure a reversion to Epicurus. Campbell, who evidently supposed the 'pleasure' of Epicurus to be purely sensual, was duly resentful; and in turn argued that Hutcheson's own 'Benevolence' was merely self-love disguised, and that his moral sense was mere instinct.

This was substantially true; but the practical criticism incurred by Hutcheson applies to both writers. Hutcheson fatally qualifies his 'greatest happiness' principle by letting the "dignity or moral importance of persons" count against numbers, justifying that anomalous position by the Shaftesburyan analogy from æsthetics which constitutes the formal scheme of his book. "Universal Benevolence would incline us to a more strong concern for the interests of great and generous characters in a high station, or make us more earnestly study the interests of any generous society, whose whole constitution was contrived to promote universal good," *just as*, in architecture, special ornament may fitly be bestowed on "some eminent place of the edifice, such as the chief front or public entrance, the adorning of which would beautify the whole more than an equal expense of ornament on any other part." Here the idea of justice, which had been tacitly excluded by the criterion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, is simply negatived by a criterion of 'beauty' which is not moral at all, though a calculus of 'universal good' is suggested as applicable. The answer to this, as to Campbell's calculus of pleasure in terms of Degree, Duration, and Consequents, is that such a calculus is impracticable. But especially is it so as formulated by Hutcheson. First, we are to act with an eye to the greatest happiness of the greatest number; and our virtue is in the ratio of our application of that rule; secondly, however, we are to prefer the good of the best community; and thirdly we are to think most of the happiness of the best people.

[1] First ed. 1728, ascribed to A. Innes, who contributed only the Introduction. Second ed., with author's name, 1733.
[2] Work cited, third ed. p. vi; cited by Scott.

Evidently ethics could not be developed upon those lines; and Hutcheson still further confuses his system by modifications adopted from Butler. Even if he had thoroughly safeguarded the happiness test by specifying that it must be one of happiness without injustice, and had not cancelled the numerical principle by subsuming the test of the 'moral importance' of persons and societies, he had either put what, as Berkeley and Butler argued before him, and as Gisborne replied to Paley fifty years later, was a test beyond the power of human faculties to apply, or he had quadrated virtue with judgment, seeing that it needed the best judgment to calculate what was really the best course for general happiness. Campbell, on the other hand, had no better succeeded in reconciling his calculus of pleasures with the test of equity; and his apparatus of hours of pleasure and degrees of pleasure has no real relation to life.

But Hutcheson, whose deepest interest was the practical promotion of goodness as a teacher, nevertheless contributed to ethics certain impulses of a scientific character. He is substantially a determinist.[1] In reading him, as in reading Locke and Shaftesbury, we feel we are in presence of something more akin to science than to theological apologetics, though all three habitually professed to connect their theism with their ethics, and Hutcheson even lectured professorially on Christian Evidences, following the century-old treatise of Grotius. He not only took thus a definite place in the development of ethics at home, but influenced the development which took place after his time in Germany.[2]

§ 5. *Wollaston.*

A curious episode in the history of ethics is the vogue attained in England under the first two Georges by the Rev. William Wollaston's RELIGION OF NATURE DELINEATED. Coming into a fortune after a youth of hardship, Wollaston (1659–1724) devoted himself to study, composing various learned treatises and publishing none, save a paraphrase on Ecclesiastes and a small Latin grammar, till a friend induced him to write a book on the questions (1) "Is there really any such thing as a natural religion, properly and truly so-called?" and (2) "If there is, what is it?" There was a third and more expansive question, which might have exacted a complete philosophy of life; but Wollaston, after producing his book in 1722 by way of answer to those cited, died in 1724, leaving nothing else finished. Of his book, which was designed only for a small private

[1] Scott, as cited, p. 254.

[2] *Id.* pp. 267, 270.

circulation, ten thousand copies were sold in a few years;[1] and Queen Caroline, who thought highly of it, commanded the Rev. John Clarke of Salisbury to translate the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew notes for her private use.[2]

The interest of the book for ethics lies in the thesis, enounced in the opening section, "Of Moral Good and Evil," that an unjust act is wrong because it is in effect an acted untruth. To this Wollaston himself attached most importance, remarking that he had never met with it anywhere. As a matter of fact, the idea is implicit in Cudworth and Clarke, but is in their hands rather an analogy than a thesis. And they did well to leave it so. As Hume took the trouble to show in a note to the third volume[3] of his TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE (1740), the argument is in a circle, for the untruth is assumed in advance to be immoral, and this needs to be proved if it is necessary to prove that the unjust act is wrong. Wollaston seems to have been on the track of a proposition which might perhaps have been of more value, as bringing a common measure to bear on truth of fact and rightness of act, namely that untruth and injustice are alike resolvable into inconsistency, the untrue statement being inconsistent with knowledge and the unjust act inconsistent with the doer's demands on others.

For the rest, though Wollaston is a vivid, interesting, thoughtful, and very learned writer, he does but systematize the ordinary argument for a rational management of life, adhering to theistic lines, and contending that life at the best is so poor in satisfactions as against its burdens and cares that a future life must be looked for to make it worth living.[4] On the question of free-will he is quite inadequate, setting himself confidently to prove that men have freedom of *action*, as if that were the point at issue. Consequently he is all for future rewards and punishments, thus keeping in the orthodox line of English moral philosophy, though the strictly deistic character of his book brought him under suspicion of indifference to the Christian creed.

§ 6. *Gay.*

Of much greater philosophic importance is the anonymous PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION concerning the Fundamental Prin-

[1] Pref. to 8th ed. p. xxiv. Perhaps the large sale was in part due to a common confusion between Wollaston's name and that of Woolston, who made a great sensation by writing (1726–28) against the Gospel miracles, and who, like Wollaston, had been of Sidney College, Cambridge.

[2] The translations were given with a new edition in 1750. The book reached an eighth edition in 1759.

[3] Pt. i, sec. 1.

[4] Sec. ix, ed. 1759, pp. 378–92.

ciples of Virtue and Morality prefixed to Edmund Law's translation of Archbishop King's De Origine Mali (1702), published in 1731. This was known to Hartley and Paley to be the work of the Rev. John Gay,[1] of Sidney College, Cambridge. The effect of this short treatise[2] is to put the utilitarian factor in ethics on its own feet, with the theistic sanction reduced to a purely formal position, and, in effect, logically dismissed as superfluous, though it is posited; while the à priori aspect of moral judgments is in effect accounted for by constant "association of ideas," a principle which is clearly indicated by Hobbes, but which Gay is one of the first to posit in this connection.

All the theological moralists who pretended to philosophic methods had recognized that happiness is the end of men's actions, and that it is legitimately, nay necessarily, to be sought; but they had invariably posited (1) God's command, rationally inferrible from the Law of Nature, as constituting the necessary 'obligation' to the acts which they said would produce happiness, and (2) future rewards and punishments as inducements to obedience. Gay in his main argument treats these as obviously supererogatory, though he introduces God's command formally. He takes, indeed, no explicit account of the moral futility of eternal punishments, which, as compared with human, represent mere purposeless evil, being but multiplication of evil on the score that the fear of them had failed to prevent evil deeds. The dilemma of the theologians on this head was that they felt bound to hold out the menace, and could not do so without teaching that the threat would be fulfilled, however uselessly, in the event of its being disregarded. Equally supererogatory is the promise of reward when, on their own showing, virtue brings happiness in this life. Only the practical pessimists, like Wollaston, could really argue for the necessity of future rewards; and even Wollaston was bound to show that good conduct yields more earthly happiness than does bad. Gay practically cancels the dilemma in his first paragraph "Concerning Obligation"[3]:—

> "Obligation is the necessity of doing, or omitting any action *in order to be happy—i.e.*, when there is such a relation between an agent and an action that the agent cannot be happy without doing or omitting that action, then the agent is said to be obliged to do or omit that action. So that obligation is evidently founded upon the prospect of happiness, and arises

[1] Unnoticed in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and in the *Encyc. Brit.*, both of which have long notices of John Gay of the *Beggar's Opera* and the *Fables*.
[2] Reprinted in Selby-Bigge's valuable collection, *British Moralists* (Clar. Press, 1897), vol. ii.
[3] Sec. ii of *Dissertation* cited.

from that necessary influence which any action has upon present or future happiness or misery. *And no greater obligation can be supposed to be laid upon any free agent without an express contradiction.*"

Here we have in advance the rebuttal of Kant's 'categorical imperative,' which is a quite empty simulation of the theological 'Thou shalt.' The only categorical (*i.e.*, unconditional) imperatives in conduct are those of civil law, which punishes breach, or alleged divine law, which threatens to punish. The rational imperative is *ipso facto* a conditional imperative, as Gay shows. By implication he says: *If* you desire to be happy, you must do thus. If you will not follow the course which secures your happiness, there can be no further argument: you must just go your way.

When he proceeds to put the inducements:—

1. The natural consequences of the action;
2. The favour or disfavour incurred by actions socially praised or condemned;
3. The pressure of law;
4. "That from the authority of God, religious";

and adds that a "full and complete obligation.....can only be that arising from the authority of God," which accordingly is the "immediate rule or criterion" of virtue, he does but establish anew his homocentric position. God, he argues with all the other theologians, cannot be conceived to desire anything but the happiness of his creatures; and that accordingly is our real criterion. "Thus the will of God is the immediate criterion of Virtue, *and the happiness of mankind the criterion of the will of God;* and therefore the happiness of man may be said to be the criterion of virtue, but once removed." Obviously it is the only applicable criterion, the will of God being a theological hypothesis, decorously interpolated. We seek our happiness in any case.

It is noteworthy that Gay did not at this point try to simplify his case by noting that the most obvious method of promoting the happiness of all is to do as we would be done by. That principle he never mentions at all. His object is to show that all morality grounds in self-regard, our approval being given, by the law of association of ideas, to all acts of the kind which, if done to us, would on that score have pleased us. Here we have the so-called 'selfish theory' more nudely stated than ever before save by Mandeville; and this in the Preface to a version, by an archdeacon and future bishop, of a treatise by an archbishop. Yet in the very statement the 'selfish theory' is made to include and account for

the 'intuitional' creed which had always been played off against it. There is nothing accidental about the theorem. Facing the objection that we cannot rationally accord merit to any man for an act which, *ex hypothesi*, he does for his own benefit, Gay acutely replies that if my friend does an act on the immediate motive of kindness to me, the fact that it is ultimately for his own benefit does not obtrude itself in my consciousness. So we get a psychological ethic of marked simplicity and yet of great importance :—

I (A) love B, who loves me, and acts accordingly; and I dislike C, who dislikes me and acts accordingly.

B's actions towards me I spontaneously cognize as good; C's as bad.

Such acts as B does to me become for me laudable, *by association of ideas*, when D does them to E, and thus even when C does them to F. That *kind* of act has thus become good, moral, virtuous all round, for C will see it as I do. *Per contra*, the acts which offend me become stamped as wrong, because they similarly offend everybody else, either as done to them or as associated with their feelings about such acts done to them. And thus the self-regarding and the intuitional conceptions are combined.

To this day no one has put more trenchantly the thesis of the egoistic basis of morals; and no valid criticism will now be found to *remove* the egoistic element. And fortunately so. Happily it is to our interest to be moral = just = consistent in profession and practice. The fact that A dislikes being cheated or lied-to tends to set up in his mind, by association of ideas, a discomfort when he cheats or lies. The absolutists, who are so malevolently ready to call all naturalistic moral science anti-moral, and who ought to denounce Gay as they denounce Hobbes,[1] are nonplussed here; egoistic ethic *involves* altruism in respect of the psychic machinery of man, of which association of ideas is one of the persistent facts. Love begets love, and, given moral reflection, checks the play of hate. Only a reflection which is not moral (as religion) or a temperament which lacks reflection (the criminal is diagnosed as generally stupid) can exclude the return of egoism upon itself and the consequent emergence of some degree of altruism.

Gay keeps his argument on its strongest ground by limiting his application of the principle of association to judgments of actions; he does not compromise it, as did Hobbes, by saying that laughter

[1] Whewell nevertheless does not do so. Was not Gay associated with bishops? But Gay is ignored to-day in discussions where his thesis would change the whole debate. *E.g.* F. H. Hayward's *Ethical Philosophy of Sidgwick*, 1901.

is a 'sudden glory' of conscious superiority, and pity a result of imagining ourselves suffering what we see suffered, though it was probably from Hobbes that he took his cue. The Hobbesian definition of laughter is simply a blunder of putting one factor for all; the definition of pity is a similar error of analysis. Here there takes place neither what Hobbes says nor association of ideas in the sense of Gay, but something else. The sight even of unexplained sorrow begets sorrow by another process; sympathy is a primary propensity, like imitation or mimicry, and here again morality roots in the 'animal' or 'irrational' nature so-called. The standing trouble is that immorality roots there also; that there are *pleasures* of antipathy, and 'pleasures of sympathy' which rest upon refusal of sympathy.

If we carry Gay's analysis further, we find that A, as slave-owner, does not resent that attitude towards a slave which he would resent if taken up towards himself; that is to say, while he may resent cruelty to the slave, he does not resent his enslavement, though he would loathe being enslaved. The slave is in the main outside of his circle of moral associations—a thing which Gay's theorem does not contemplate. And so with actions towards an alien community or group in its corporate relation with his own: the play of association of ideas on one line is checked and limited by that which occurs on another, and, instead of the universal morality of Gay's theorem, we have the morality of class, of tribe, of nation, of race. If Gay had seen the problem concretely as well as abstractly, and had felt about it as he professed to think the will of God prescribed, he would have set about applying the law of reciprocity to public life by showing that England was not treating Ireland or her colonies as Englishmen would like to be treated if they were Irishmen or colonists; and that the keeping of the mass of the people at home ignorant was equally irreconcilable with the knowledge of the upper classes that they would not have liked to be so treated (though here they might argue that this assumed a kind of consciousness among the poor which really did not exist, by reason of *their* associations of ideas). But such a procedure was evidently outside of the then-existing range of political thought. It was so for the serious Butler; and in the next generation the morally pretentious Burke is found pointing equivocally to the hard lot of many of the toilers as a fact the discussion of which would be dangerous to society—this as a reason for not discussing unsettling topics of religion. Moral progress was not to be made from above downwards, save inasmuch as ideas may have percolated in that fashion.

If, as is highly probable, Gay was the author[1] of an anonymous INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN APPETITES AND AFFECTIONS, printed at Lincoln in 1747,[2] he did not there usefully develop his theory. The doctrine of that book, as first posited, is that the argument of Locke against innate ideas tells "with equal force against all *implanted* APPETITES whatever."[3] Soon, however, it is declared that "it is the innateness of moral *principles*, or the natural determinations of will only, that.....ought not to be admitted."[4] This is only a fresh rejection of Hutcheson's moral sense, whereas the author's theoretic object is to argue that we must not assume innate *proclivities—i.e.*, by implication, either moral or immoral. His real aim, however, is merely to deny the supposed *moral* proclivities, in favour of his thesis that all moral merit must depend upon reasoned choice between courses of conduct.[5] He is seeking, in fact, to bar the doctrine of determinism, against which he argues temperately but fallaciously. To the determinists he appeals to say "whether they do not feel within themselves a power both of determining and acting independently on the objects which solicit their choice.....We find that we are not *at all times* carried away with the stream, but *in some cases* can bear up and move against it, though it be but heavily."[6] But this grants determinism. Two or more objects of choice are posited, and *both* solicitations constitute 'streams.' The choice is in terms of the stronger 'stream.' The further argument merely proves that determination of will may vary in respect of moral culture and experience.

Though he continues to apply his principle of association of ideas, Gay here finally falls between the two stools of that theory and his theism, which last seems to have grown upon him. After rejecting alike an innate moral sense and innate proclivities to either moral or immoral action, he stands quite uncritically, and, apparently, unwittingly, to the assumption of an *innate* faculty of judgment = reason. Seeking to preserve for his religious purpose what he thinks the essentials of merit, he eliminates from the ego the very proclivities between which, on his own showing, reason has to decide. An ego without proclivities would be an ego which could not even have those spontaneous sensations of agreeable = right and disagreeable = wrong upon which he founded his first theory.

Such a self-contradiction may indeed be reasonably urged as discrediting the ascription to Gay of the INQUIRY of 1747. It has,

[1] Cp. G. S. Bower, *Hartley and James Mill*, 1881, p. 25.
[2] Rep. in Parr's (posthumously published) collection of *Metaphysical Tracts*, 1837.
[3] *Tracts*, as cited, p. 48. (The page numbering includes the previous treatise in the collection.) [4] *Id.* p. 51. [5] *Id.* pp. 50, 52. [6] *Id.* p. 73.

however, a close resemblance in manner and method to the DISSERTATION; it adheres to the principle of association of ideas,[1] and it repeatedly refers eulogistically to King's treatise, to the translation of which the DISSERTATION had been prefixed. It is therefore strongly to be suspected that this is a case of philosophic relapse on the part of a philosopher whose lot in life was unfavourable to philosophic progress. But this does not alter the fact that Gay's first essay is one of the most important contributions ever made to the solution of the problem of the origins of morality. Of course it needs systematic development and quantification: it is requisite, for instance, to explain how the reflex approval of another's act is limited by an *active* pressure of self-interest which is more powerful. Still, his simple proposition that self-regarding moral judgments become other-regarding by association of ideas, and *thus* constitute the intuitional aspect of general moral judgments, is a more decisive application of the association principle than any by Hartley or James Mill. Properly weighed, it should have served to solve the dispute between the intuitional and the utilitarian camps. But by the intuitionists it has never even been noticed; and those utilitarians who have noticed it do not seem ever to have recognized its psychological importance.[2]

§ 6. *Berkeley.*[3]

The apologetic purpose which so strongly colours the work of other churchmen from Cumberland onwards is specially marked in Bishop Berkeley, who may be here taken out of his chronological order as having touched only incidentally on ethics. It was an age of official defences of Christianity against the unbelief which, always persisting in Europe from the time of the Renaissance, had spread so greatly after the civil wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in France, England, and Germany respectively. The philosophy of Bishop Berkeley, though often accepted on its negative side by non-religionists, was substantially inspired, or at least reinforced, by resentment against the growing volume of freethinking polemic in his day, and bears the mark of its motive in its obvious one-sidedness. That is best seen in his THREE DIALOGUES, where his representative insists upon the 'merely' perceived character of all impressions from the physical world,

[1] Sec. i, 8; v, 11; vii, 1, etc.
[2] In the *Inquiry* of 1747 there is an interesting attempt to set up a mathematical calculus of sympathies (sec. vii), which might be worth study by the mathematically inclined.
[3] George Berkeley (1684–1753), Bishop of Cloyne.

while taking for granted, without reflection, the simple actuality of all communications of ideas and all reasoning from them. In discussion, that is to say, we raise no philosophic question as to the simple and external actuality of each other, of what each says to the other, of his words as being heard and so actualized; while the rest of the universe is declared to 'exist *only* in perception' (whatever *only* may mean), and to be maintained as a perpetual object of perception only by divine agency. In consistency the divine agency must be held to produce the denials equally with the assertions, the ideas equally with the sensations, the memories equally with the reasonings. The philosopher's philosophy, further, exists only as perceived by those who attend to it; and the free-thinking objections are on the same footing. Finally, the Deity exists only as inferred, and would 'cease to exist' (for this is part of the Berkeleyan verbalism) if not inferred. Such is the real philosophic outcome of an argument framed to confound those who declined to accept either unintelligible or incredible propositions in the sacred books.

In Ethics, though he only occasionally discusses it, Berkeley is really more effective as against the deists or theists than in his idealism. Discussing Shaftesbury, he asks (following Newton)[1]: "To what moral purpose might not Fate or Nature serve as well as a Deity on such a scheme?"[2] And the challenge has never been rationally answered on the theistic side.[3] Thus Berkeley in his own despite ultimately tells for rationalism in ethics as in metaphysics. It is indeed an odd course to enrol him, as one historian of philosophy has done, among the utilitarians.[4] Not only is he the first English thinker to put the practical objection to abstract utilitarianism—that is impossible for men to forecast all the effects of all their actions—but he lays it down in the same connection in his DISCOURSE OF PASSIVE OBEDIENCE that "when any doubt arises concerning the morality of an action it is plain this cannot be determined by computing the public good which in that particular case it is attended with, but only by comparing it with the eternal law of reason."[5] It is true that at the same time he declares the eternal law of reason to have regard to *universal* good by framing universal rules, which are never to be infringed for a particular good, even though their observance by the individual "should

[1] *Principia*, Scholium at end.
[2] *Theory of Vision Vindicated*, 1733, p. 2. Cp. *Alciphron*, Dial. iv, § 18.
[3] See Whewell, *Lectures*, p. 136, as to the protest of Mackintosh, who really makes out no defence.
[4] Albee, *Hist. of English Utilitarianism*, ch. iv.
[5] *Discourse* cited, §§ 8, 13.

involve his family, his friends, *his country*, in *all those evils which are accounted the greatest and most insupportable to human nature.*" But if that be utilitarianism it is hard to say what moralist may not be included among its supporters.

> The one ground upon which Berkeley can properly be so styled is his teaching that unless virtue is to be rewarded in a future state there is no joy in thinking of it.[1] But this position, which was to become conventional, he takes up only by way of polemic against Shaftesbury, and does not develop. The DISCOURSE is his deliberate doctrine.

Berkeley was simply begging the question (as he so often does) when he posited an immutable law of nature prescribing a general rule which could have such results as those indicated. The DISCOURSE is indeed the most 'Hibernian' peace of reasoning he ever produced, being a successful effort to out-Hobbes Hobbes in the name of the law of God. That the censure so freely bestowed on Hobbes for his doctrine of passive obedience was never extended to Berkeley is an illustration of the imperfect equity of many moralists.[2] Its exquisite climax consists in a reminder to tyrants that if they *do* abuse their power grossly men *will* rebel, in defiance of the law of God and Nature; and that all the moralist can do is to tell men they ought not to.[3] The direct contribution of Berkeley to ethics, then, is small, and consists mainly in his doctrine that good and evil are necessarily measured by self-love, and that that is our guide in conduct.[4] But his criticism of Shaftesbury, recoiling as it does on himself (since the insistence on future punishments is merely the theological form of utilitarianism), is a logical disintegrator of theology in ethics.

Practically, Berkeley coincided with Clarke and the other upholders of an ethic of theologico-rational 'fitness' in actions, giving effect to his theism by assuming that in giving man a rational judgment of right and wrong the Deity imposed a Command, the breach of which he would punish hereafter.[5] This was substantially the theological position of Warburton, "who did, in fact, give to the theory of morals the form in which it has been received among us [*sc.* orthodox academics] almost up to the present time";[6] though Warburton superadded to his formula the Shaftesburyan Moral Sense.[7] To that general doctrine Matthew Tindal, in his

[1] *Alciphron*, Dial. iii, § 11.
[2] A modern theologian, of liberal leanings, has been disingenuous enough to argue that the politics of Hobbes, Hume, and Gibbon prove the anti-democratic tendency of Rationalism. A citation of Cudworth, Cumberland, Berkeley, Burke, and Butler would as well prove the charge against orthodoxy.
[3] *Discourse*, §§ 44, 45.
[4] *Id.* § 5.
[5] *Id.* § 6.
[6] Whewell, *Lectures*, p. 103.
[7] *Id.* p. 104.

CHRISTIANITY AS OLD AS THE CREATION (1730), replied that if Reason = Command there is no point in interjecting the latter by way of a Revelation. If we recognize Reason as our guide the command is a supererogatory abstraction in philosophy, and a mere fulmination in religion; if we do not, it vanishes. Tindal, in effect, outdid all the religious apriorists in affirming the absolute clearness, fulness, and perfection of the law of nature as perceptible by reason; and proceeded to show that reason is actually employed by believers as a corrective of revelation rather than *vice versâ*.[1] Against Clarke in particular he shows that that authority undoes his panegyric of the rule of reason in order to vindicate Christianity, which he poorly recommends by saying that it came into the world when the light of natural reason was in a manner extinct.[2]

It is generally held to have been on the provocation of Tindal in particular that Butler wrote his ANALOGY.[3] Tindal had logically exploded the attempt to buttress Revelation by the authority of an 'immutable and eternal' law of Nature, detected by an immutable and eternal Reason. The reply of Warburton, to the effect that natural reason could recognize the rational truth of revealed moral doctrines which it could not have *discovered*,[4] was plainly self-destructive, besides being flatly inconsistent with the theorem of the obvious fitness of the moral law. Warburton's doctrine was presumably current, however, before he propounded it in his DIVINE LEGATION OF MOSES (1738), and was probably known to Butler, who would easily detect its futility. That shrewd debater, who followed Clarke in representing Christianity as a re-promulgation of a natural religion which men had practically lost,[5] slowly and cautiously planned a reply to deistic rationalism which would upset that in much the same fashion as Tindal had upset orthodox rationalism. The method was to show that deism itself had as such no better standing-ground than revelationism, rationalistic or other. The Christian bishop, in short, framed an argument of which the ultimate effect was to leave no standing-ground for ethical theism as such, forcing a choice between non-theistic naturalism and irrational faith in sacred books. Such was the mental constitution, and such the strategy, of the most distinguished of English Christian moralists.

[1] Work cited, p. 201; and the whole chapter, *passim*.
[2] *Id.* p. 381.
[3] Cp. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, p. 102; Spooner, *Bishop Butler*, p. 139.
[4] Cp. Whewell, pp. 145-46.
[5] *Six Sermons*, i, pars. 1 and 2.

§ 7. *Butler.*

In Butler[1] the apologetic preoccupation is as marked as in Berkeley, and nowhere more so than in his ripest work, the ANALOGY BETWEEN NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION (1736).[2] Its central contention, borrowed from Origen, is that anomalies are no valid argument against Christianity on the part of deists, since Nature, considered as the work of the deist's omnipotent and benevolent creator and ruler, is no less anomalous. This was obviously just; and if the argument in Butler's own day aroused little open discussion it probably was because it nonplussed alike the earnest deist and the orthodox Christian; while the few atheists, who smilingly applauded the bishop, were content to leave him to do their work, and the orthodox could not afford to repudiate a dialectic which embarrassed the deists. As a vindication of Christianity, which it avowed to be anomalous, the argument was plainly a sophism. Were not all the other religions anomalous likewise, and therefore equally conformable to the anomalous constitution of Nature? By what test could any one pretend to prove which were the right anomalies? Gladstone, in our own day, in the very act of acclaiming Butler's criterion, assails Islam as being—anomalous! There could be no more striking illustration of the rarity of intellectual rectitude, even among men earnestly concerned about conduct, where the advocacy of religion is involved.

Butler, then, is not a typically philosophic or scientific truth-seeker; he is a priest of serious and philosophic turn, determined to meet freethinking argument with countermining argument. The preoccupation is evident throughout his Sermons, and is illustrated by his life, which was singularly successful on the economic side. At the age of twenty-two, immediately after taking his B.A. degree and being ordained, he was appointed preacher to the Rolls Chapel: a proof of the impression of intellectual power he made on men from the first, for his father was a dissenting shopkeeper—a bad recommendation for a Churchman. Three years later he received a prebendal stall in Salisbury Cathedral; and a year after that he was appointed to the living of Houghton, near Darlington. This being ill-endowed, his friend the then Bishop of Durham substituted for it in 1725 the living of Stanhope, "one of the richest parsonages in England," whereafter he resigned the Rolls Chapel. In 1733,

[1] Joseph Butler (1692–1752), sometime Bishop of Bristol, and finally Bishop of Durham.
[2] Published while he was Rector of Stanhope, and not yet a bishop. The *Fifteen Sermons* (selected from those he had preached at the Rolls Chapel) came out in 1726.

however, he was made chaplain to the Lord Chancellor, who further gave him a prebend in Rochester Cathedral in 1736, with permission to reside half the year at Stanhope; and in the latter year he was also appointed Clerk of the Closet to Queen Caroline. He thus held four posts at one time; and when in 1738 he accepted, with ill-subdued indignation,[1] the poor bishopric of Bristol, he held on to the other posts till, in 1740, his appointment to the rich deanery of St. Paul's induced him to resign Stanhope and the stall at Rochester. Bishop of Bristol he remained till in 1750 he was promoted to the rich bishopric of Durham, in which he survived only two years.

Butler, however, was no more a typical worldly priest than he was a typical truth-seeker. To the common run of apologetics he relates rather as a pessimist than as either a zealot or a mere partisan. Optimistic in his assertion that public and private good are "so perfectly coincident that.....we can scarce promote one without the other," and that all men's appetites "have a tendency to promote both private and public good,"[2] he was yet pessimistic in his view of human proclivity. The customary tactic was to acclaim Christianity as the saviour of civilization when its truth was assailed; and then to lay on unbelief the blame of the 'dissolution of morals' which was avowed to be visible everywhere throughout its sphere. In these matters the Protestant and Catholic clergies of Europe were pretty much upon an equality of subterfuge. Neither ever tried to explain how a world ruled by the Christian God should do so little credit to Christianity, or why many-churched Christianity should fail to convince so many of God's creatures. For morality's sake, all alike felt bound to maintain that virtue, with faith, involved happiness, and vice the contrary; whence it seemingly followed that such fairly happy men as Charles II, George I, and George II must at least have an overplus of faith to balance things. To the ordinary clerical conventions Butler was necessarily committed. He can hardly have reckoned the virtuous Queen Caroline happier than her husband; but it is not on record that he thought her plight was accounted for by the imperfection of her faith.

Rather he set himself, in his sombre way, on the one hand to make a case for the creed of his Church against the educated men of the world who treated it as exploded by the deistic criticism, culminating in Tindal, and on the other hand to bring to serious

[1] Letter to Walpole, in Canon Spooner's *Bishop Butler*, 1901, p. 21. Butler's defect of sainthood, noted here by Arnold, was quite different from that of Spinoza, who cared nothing for wealth.

[2] *Fifteen Sermons*, i (Works, ed. 1824, ii, 35, 38).

thoughts on conduct the multitude of heedless conformists of all classes who floated on the surface of English life in his day. All accounts make him a melancholy man; and there is little in his writings to suggest that he found much comfort in evangelical Christian faith. As bishop of Bristol, he refused a preaching licence to Wesley.[1] His famous charge to the Durham clergy is a plea for diligent attention to the externals of religion as a main way of preserving it. On this score, and on that of his insertion of a cross in a wall of Bristol Cathedral, some Churchmen after his death alleged that he had leanings to Catholicism. In reality he had too little zest even for the minimum evangelical faith of the Church of England to be capable of zeal for that of Rome.

As a moralist, however, he is always a defender of the faith, employing dialectic where others used rhetoric, in virtue of his intellectual cast of mind. Most serious clergymen held that 'self-love' was the explanation alike of irreligion and of average Christian worldliness; but inasmuch as Mandeville had declared self-love to be the determinant of all moral codes, Butler saw fit to argue that there was not nearly enough self-love in the world, so few men having any intelligent perception of their own interests. Since they seemed in general, nevertheless, at least as happy as he, he was forced, like Berkeley, to make his ethic turn on the future state. The case for that is put in the forefront of the ANALOGY as being part of 'natural religion'; and his argument from 'probability' on this theme is in effect that immortality (for all animals as well as for all men) is highly probable, and so is likely to mean a process of rewards and punishments by the infinitely good Creator. On these theological fundamentals Butler is as unsatisfying as any theistic writer. Though he could preach well and thoughtfully of iniquity as an object of compassion no less than of resentment,[2] the notion that an infinitely powerful and good creator should create an innumerable host of sinners in order to punish them for sinning seems to excite in him no repugnance.

It does but set him upon a dogged denial of determinism, which he meets with all the crudest arguments about its effects on conduct, never attempting to meet the crushing rebuttals of the leading determinists. He does not scruple to call them 'fatalists,' including Locke in his aspersion, and grossly appealing to popular prejudice by saying that "the opinion of necessity seems to be the very basis upon which infidelity grounds itself."[3] The fact that Augustine,

[1] Canon Spooner, *Bishop Butler*, p. 25.
[2] *Fifteen Sermons*, ix. "Revenge is doing harm merely for harm's sake." Pref. p. 20.
[3] *Analogy*, pt. i, ch. 6 (Works, ed. 1824, i, 140).

Luther, Calvin, and Knox were all theological determinists must have been known to him; and his treatment of the subject is thus one of the grounds upon which some Rationalists have charged him with intellectual dishonesty. However that may be, the chapter "Of the Opinion of Necessity" in the ANALOGY is one of the most crudely reasoned, to say nothing of its being also one of the worst written, discussions on the subject of free-will among writers of good standing. There is nothing in it to show that he had ever given calm attention to the series of writers, from Hobbes to Collins, who had exhaustively debated the issues. As an *argumentum ad hominem* it is sufficiently met by his own polemic against "that great corruption of Christianity, popery,"[1] which had latterly rejected determinism very much as he did, and under which, nevertheless, by his own account, "corruptions of the grossest sort have been in vogue for many generations in many parts of Christendom," including systematic persecution, which he reprobated.

Insofar as, upon the lead of Shaftesbury, he handles ethics from the human standpoint, Butler shows a power of analysis which, could he have forgotten his apologetic preoccupation, might have greatly furthered moral science. His argument for a rational or 'calm' self-love is so far in line with both Shaftesbury and Mandeville, each of whom could have claimed that it supported him. Balanced by the plea for the regulative control of conscience, it is a general statement of the grounds of rational morality, to which the apparatus of future punishment is adventitious. On the other hand, he followed Berkeley in pointing out the impossibility of making the utilitarian or greatest-happiness test the immediate criterion of action,[2] and the difficulty of making it the final one.[3] In another mood, too, he shows the futility of any assumption that religion can secure the just operation of 'conscience.' "Hypocrisy in the moral and religious consideration of things," he tells the House of Lords, "is of much larger extent than every one may imagine";[4] going on to explain that he means the "self-deceit" of men "deluding their consciences." In this indictment the Puritans of the previous century are declared to have committed "the most enormous act of mere power, in defiance of all laws of God and man," "with unheard-of hypocrisy towards men, towards God, and their own consciences."[5] No severer indictment of the religious

[1] *Six Sermons*, v (ed. 1824, ii, 363–64).
[2] Diss. *On the Nature of Virtue* (at end of the *Analogy*), under *fifthly*.
[3] Introd. to *Analogy*, and last cit.
[4] *Six Sermons*, iii (Works, ii, 314). Cp. in the Rolls Sermons, x, "Upon Self-Deceit."
[5] *Sermon to the House of Lords*, as cited, p. 322.

conscience has been penned, unless it be Berkeley's. Both arraign the Rebellion as sin *in excelsis*.

It does not appear to have occurred to Butler that on this view of the self-depraving power of Conscience his theorem of the "natural supremacy of conscience," the faculty "placed within us to be our proper governor,"[1] amounts for philosophic purposes to exactly nothing. It does so indeed from the start. "Conscience and self-love," he had affirmed, "*if* we understand our true happiness, always lead the same way."[2] Then it is our understanding of our true happiness that is the determining factor; and this, it appears, may also be conscience, since that is the "principle of reflection."[3] But if men can deceive themselves, then the understanding can deceive itself, and conscience, which deceives itself, is a weathercock. If there is to be any moral standard on this reasoning it must be found objectively, either on Hobbes's principle or by an investigation of social utilities, about which also men can ostensibly deceive themselves. The ethical result is dogmatic nihilism. By denying that the Puritans were obeying conscience, Butler in effect merely says that men are discarding conscience when they dissent from him.

It is plain that this attitude towards the political strifes of the previous century precluded Butler from any surmise of a need for social or political reconstruction. When he preaches "Upon the Love of our Neighbour" he makes a very clear and sensible analysis of the doctrine that every bias is a form of 'self-love,' pointing out that, while good-will to others is certainly a personal bias like another, it is idle to say that a helpful attitude towards others is 'selfish' in the same sense as is the exclusive pursuit of our own economic advantage. "It is manifest that nothing can be of consequence to mankind or any creature but happiness";[4] but "happiness or satisfaction consists only in the enjoyment of those objects which are by nature suited to our several particular appetites, passions, and affections."[5] We follow these and *so* attain happiness; whereas if conscious 'self-love' wholly engrossed us there would be no such thing as happiness for us. If, on the other hand, we have a benevolent interest in other people, the effort to promote their happiness adds to ours, like the pursuit of any other object. There is thus no incompatibility between self-love and benevolence. Here Butler puts himself in direct antagonism to the Stoic dogma, revived by Kant, that virtue must have no pleasure from the doing of good.

[1] *Fifteen Sermons*, ii. [2] *Id.* ser. iii. [3] *Id.* ii and iii.
[4] Ser. 12 (p. 220). [5] Ser. 11 (p. 187).

The old theological dogma, still current for Mandeville, that virtue is conditional on self-denial, is by him definitely repelled.

But when it comes to the consideration of duty towards others, as apart from the decent reciprocities and honesties of daily life, Butler has no serious challenge to put to the accepted social ethic. We are to love our neighbour as ourself; that is to say, we are to try to help him to happiness, to which his right is as ours.[1] But there is no hint of any new and comprehensive activity towards that end. We are to be 'good neighbours,' kind to the distressed and gentle towards dependents; but despite the text, "Be ye perfect even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect," we are not called upon to love all mankind, such an object being "very much out of our view." There is no question, then, of an effort towards peace on earth, of a spirit of fraternity towards the foreigner. Nay, even the command to love our country is "speaking to the upper part of the world"; and "there plainly is wanting a less general and nearer object of benevolence to the bulk of men than that of their country."[2] So that "our neighbour" is to be quite literally understood, for all save the "upper part of the world"; and for them there is no further counsel as to the duties they owe to the large lower part. Of course they are all to love God, for the usual theological reasons.

For any large and critical survey of public morals, then, Butler is not to be looked to; though he threw his weight on the side of toleration, and made a creditable plea for the partial education of charity-school children, which compares very favourably with Mandeville's counter-plea. On the other hand, he accepted colonial slavery,[3] pleading only for humanity to the slave and his instruction in the Christian religion, which explains that Christ died to secure his redemption in another world. Butler's recognition of the difficulty of forecasting social utilities set him against any notion of applying ethics to a rectification of the social system; in which he saw in general only the evils of individual misconduct. He, who declared public and private interest to be identical, and for himself drew five ecclesiastical salaries at one time, preached that "as God has made plentiful provision for all his creatures, the wants of all, even the poorest, might be supplied, as far as it is fit they should, by a proper distribution of it."[4] Living in the England of George II, with drunkenness destroying myriads every year, he

[1] Ser. 12 (p. 220).
[2] Ser. 12 (pp. 205–6).
[3] *Six Sermons*, i (p. 282).
[4] *Id.* ii (p. 297).

could proclaim that "in every view of things, and upon all accounts, irreligion is at present our chief danger."[1]

With all his sombre gravity, then, Butler is no comprehensive thinker. Rather he is the grave expounder of a series of varying moral moods. In one he is all for inculcating a "reasonable self-love"[2] as a thing lacking; in another he feels that "there is not anything relating to men and characters more surprising and unaccountable than this partiality to themselves which is observable in many"; and he dwells on the inability of some to attend to anything but their own interest.[3] Thus we come to the conception of a "false selfishness."[4] And after arguing that "if we will act conformably to the economy of man's nature, reasonable self-love must govern,"[5] he is so strongly moved to reject, as he rightly does, Spinoza's precept to suppress compassion that he decides[6] that "the imperfection of the higher principles of reason and religion in man, *the little influence they have upon our practice*, and the strength and prevalency of the contrary ones, plainly require these affections to be a restraint upon the latter, and a supply to the deficiencies of the former."[7] Such a proposition points towards the later ethic of Hume; but Butler's thought is never co-ordinated.

His service to thought, like Berkeley's, is very much the opposite of what he purposed. Both fought under the flag of creed, by reason of the limitation of vision which could see no hope for good life save in terms of the pietism with which they had always associated it; and the result was that they stamped their teaching with temperamental malice, intensified by their sense of frustration. Always they incline to impute constructive wickedness to those who see the problem with other eyes. Within two years of his death Butler begins his Charge to the Durham clergy with a lament over "the general decay of religion in this nation, which is now observed by everyone.....The influence of it is more and more wearing out of the minds of men, even of those who do not pretend to enter into speculations upon the subject; but the number of those who do, and who profess themselves unbelievers, increases, and with their numbers their zeal. Zeal! it is natural to ask—for what? Why, truly, *for* nothing, but *against* every thing that is good and sacred among us." The malice has been deepened: there subsists only the dogged resolve for the policy of keeping up religious observances.

[1] *Six Sermons*, i (p. 289). [2] *Fifteen Sermons*, i and ii. [3] *Id.* Ser. 10 (pp. 166, 169).
[4] *Id.* p. 171. [5] *Id.* Ser. 2, p. 59. [6] *Id.* Ser. 5, p. 96.
[7] Contrast Berkeley's contention that "tenderness and benevolence of temper.....like all other passions, must be restrained and kept under." *Passive Obedience*, § 13.

At bottom, such religionists had no faith in the system the structure of which they insisted on ascribing to a Good Supreme Being. Always passioning over 'infidelity,' they showed what Spencer calls "the profoundest of all infidelity, the fear lest the truth should be bad." The sequel is quaint. Berkeley, as Hume demonstrated, became a fountain of skepticism; Butler helped to turn critical thought away from deism towards naturalism. Thus and thus did they make for intellectual betterment, undermining what they adored, and re-founding what they sought to undermine.

In the very world of opinion to which they specially appealed, that of the Church of England, moral theory, as we have seen and shall see further, shifted steadily to the homocentric standpoint. When Berkeley, outgoing Locke, wrote that "nothing is a law merely because it conduceth to the public good, but because it is decreed by the will of God, which alone can give the sanction of a law of nature to any precept,"[1] he did but transfer to theology some of the offence given by Hobbes's ascription of the sanction to the law of the State. And when Dr. Waterland wrote that, if divine law were put out of consideration, "the being further just and grateful [for a benefit], *without future prospects*, has as much of moral virtue in it as folly or indiscretion has; so that, the Deity once set aside, it is a demonstration there could be no morality at all,"[2] he shocked and repelled the better men on his own side.[3] Under such repulsion, as well as upon rational impulsion, ethics moved towards naturalism even in the hands of men who sought to fasten theism upon it at all costs.

[1] *Passive Obedience*, § 31. [2] *Works*, v, 508, cited by Whewell.
[3] See Whewell, *Lectures*, pp. 152–53.

Chapter VI

HUME

Apart from the brief contribution of Gay, it is with David Hume (1711–1776) that the spirit of incontaminate science seems first to enter into moral philosophy in the modern world. Hobbes had been possessed by a political purpose; Spinoza by a God-idea; Locke didactically imposes his as do all the others down to and including Butler; it is with Hutcheson that ethical method begins to emerge in something like an independent form; and Hutcheson is still preoccupied with religion and 'edification.' With Hume we breathe a philosophically purer air. Alone of the leading moderns, up to his day, he reveals himself as concerned first and last for a philosophic truth which is also a scientific truth, reached by sheer critical inquest on the data.[1] His work is of course a culmination of a century's effort, being made possible, even to his penetrating faculty, only by the manifold thinking done from Hobbes and Spinoza to Berkeley and Butler, by all of which Hume profited further than he ever suggests. In that attitude of reticence he anticipates Spencer. But his work is nonetheless an expression of the impulse and the method which yielded the results of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton.

It was the conjunction of a strong literary ambition with narrow means that nerved the *gauche* young Scotsman to exile himself at the age of twenty-three in the French provinces, where he lived for three years, bringing back with him his Treatise of Human Nature,[2] the strongest philosophic performance of his age. But only a passion for ratiocination could have moved a needy man to plan the Treatise as a means of income; and the fact that he received for the first two volumes fifty pounds down from the

[1] Lewes censures the sub-title of Hume's first *Treatise*—"An attempt to introduce the Experimental way of Reasoning into Moral Subjects"—as showing a misconception of 'Experiment' (*History of Philosophy*, 4th ed. ii, 326). This is a mistake. Lewes had forgotten that 'experimental' and 'experiential' had originally the same force in English, as they still have in French. This French usage has been criticized by Englishmen in the same mistaken way. An experiment is an experience; and the essence of experimental method is just the reduction of experience to exactness. Lewes contends indeed that there was no novelty in Hume's attempt to test psychology by experience; but that is a question of degree. Hume applied the test where other leading philosophers had not done so.

[2] Vols. i and ii published in 1739; vol. iii in 1740.

publisher is highly creditable to the literary standards of the period. It was the hardest reading offered to Englishmen since the age of the schoolmen. The third volume, which contains the ethical part of the treatise, is the most readable, and is presumably the latest in composition as in order. It is not, in fact, closely co-ordinated with the whole. The most notable doctrine in the earlier part of the work is that of the purely experiential basis of the idea of cause and effect—a thought as old as Algazzali (12th c.), and successively thrown out by Glanvil, Hobbes,[1] and Malebranche, but first built into a philosophic system by Hume. In the third volume the fact that the operation of the will must be thought as *caused* is one of the data of the argument that the will is not to be conceived as 'free.' But the two propositions are not brought into connection.

In the next ten years Hume recast his book. Written with the spontaneous energy of youth, it had a quality of arrogance which on re-reading jarred so much on his own nerves that he could not endure it,[2] and he accordingly condensed and rearranged the first volume as an INQUIRY INTO THE HUMAN UNDERSTANDING (1748), and re-wrote the third as an INQUIRY CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS (1751)—a condensation of the second volume appearing still later (1757) as a DISSERTATION ON THE PASSIONS. It is generally recognized that some of the power and depth of the first two volumes has been lost in the popularized recasts; but that the INQUIRY on Morals, which he declared to be, "in my own opinion, of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best," is fairly deserving of that estimate in respect of arrangement, coherence, and finish. In the first INQUIRY, too, the argument on Liberty and Necessity is brought into connection with the doctrine of causation. It is handled more elaborately than in the TREATISE, but simply and clearly enough to enlighten reasonable readers; Hume explaining that 'Necessity' simply means causedness, which every one really recognizes in regard to human action in ordinary life by counting on the normal operation of motive; while 'Liberty' is simply the liberty of action *upon* a motive, which no one ever disputed. But Hume would have done well, as Locke did, to point out that the *term* 'free' has no significance in regard to the operation of preference. Either I choose what I spontaneously want or I choose otherwise upon pressure; and neither way is 'freedom' in question. I am not

[1] See the passages cited by Lewes, *Hist. of Philos.* 4th ed. ii, 57, 338. Wollaston comes pretty near the point. Ed. 1759, p. 145.
[2] Hill Burton, *Life of Hume*, i, 97–98.

'free' to like what I dislike; if I *do* what I had disliked doing it is because another motive supervenes. If I do it to please some one, then I now 'like' to do it for that reason more than I dislike doing it from bias. If I abstain under a legal or theological threat it must be because I fear the threat would be fulfilled on my non-compliance. Always my *will* is determined either by native bias or superinduced recoil; it is my *act* that is free; and there alone has the word 'freedom' application.

But exactitude in terminology is not Hume's forte; in the TREATISE he goes astray at one point even in the argument by inattention to his phrasing. "Our actions," he there writes,[1] "are more voluntary than our judgments; but we have not more liberty in the one than in the other." This is not what he means. If we had no liberty in our actions the word would have no meaning at all. He means that our *volitions to act* are more voluntary than our simple judgments, in the sense that they involve the action, an active as against a passive form of decision, but that both alike are effects of considerations or motives which are causal. In both books, however, Hume puts emphatically the truth that the determination of the will by motive, instead of removing responsibility and the operation of morality, is the very condition of their existence. If there were no regular sequences of motivation there could be no reliance on conduct at all, and punishment would not merely be (as the free-willist argues against the determinist) an injustice; it would be a futile cruelty, for neither the menace nor the infliction could operate causally as it is intended to do. Hume further lays his finger on the fundamental fact of the endless variation of men's bias, so constantly ignored by the theologians and others who insist on the obviousness of the moral law to reason—*their* reason and *their* proclivity being understood. "I would have any one give me a reason," he remarks, "why virtue and vice may not be involuntary *as well as beauty and deformity*."[2] This is a fatal home-thrust to the æsthetic ethic of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, who reasoned always from the analogy of æsthetic *perception* and never followed up that of the variation in the object. 'We *perceive* moral beauty and ugliness' was their one refrain. But what if we *are* morally ugly to others' perception? Is that deformity alterable?

Hume's answer, of course, coincides with that of Hobbes and his other predecessors. Bias *is* susceptible in varying degrees to pressure, and blame and punishment are among the modes of

[1] Bk. iii, sec. 4.

[2] *Id. ib.*

pressure; education and kindly suasion being others. This is not a negation of the determination of the will; it is one of the modes thereof. But it is obvious that either through lack of the corrective pressures or through the strength of bad bias, inherent in structure, there are many immoral wills, the theoretic ignoring of which is one of the follies of optimism, and the mere execration of which is one of the futilities of a theology which really teaches that they are created bad. Hume, detested to this day by religionists for his dissolvent influence on their creed, exhibited its moral no less than its historical untenableness.

One religious editor, Dr. J. H. Hyslop, of Columbia College, New York, has sought to show[1] that Hume's philosophy is divided against itself in that he "disputes the very existence of causation" while affirming the causedness of volitions. The same writer alleges that Hume "asserts the existence of *free will*.....in the only sense in which, he says, it can be maintained to have a meaning at all," and "also asserts that *this* freedom is a necessary condition of moral principles." These hopelessly mistaken statements illustrate the blinding effect of animus—which in this writer's case is abundantly obvious, notably in his repeated cry that Hume had the "malice of the sceptic" and was bent on "mischief" when he took any occasion to expose the falsehood of the creeds which for centuries had made Europe a shambles, and which still darkened life around him.

A glance at the introduction to Kant's PROLEGOMENA might have reminded a professed instructor in ethics that Hume never for a moment denied "the existence of causation";[2] his problem was "a question concerning the *origin*, not concerning the *indispensable need*, of the concept." Nor does he ever "assert the existence of free *will*." On this point the critic is completely confused. Hume asserted the existence of freedom of action, not of will; he uses the term 'freedom' or 'liberty' in *this* connection, never of 'will.' The animus of Dr. Hyslop is shown not only in this confusion, which only animus could create, but in his insistence on taking the TREATISE, the work of a youth, as presenting Hume's permanent teaching, in the face of Hume's own protest in the advertisement to the posthumous corrected edition of his works.

Dr. Hyslop quotes Hume as writing to Elliott: "The philosophical principles are the same in both" [TREATISE and INQUIRY]. Of course they are; but in the same letter Hume wrote: "So vast an undertaking, planned before I was one-and-twenty, and composed before twenty-five, must necessarily

[1] In his edition of *Hume's Treatise of Morals* (Boston, 1893), introd. p. 26 *sq.*, 33 *sq.*
[2] See Hume's own letter in Burton, i, 97.

be very defective." And in the INQUIRY the working out is at points so different that Sir A. Selby-Bigge, the most careful investigator of the matter, notes "a very remarkable change of tone or temper which, even more than particular statements, leads him to suppose that the system of Morals in the Inquiry is really and essentially different from that in the Treatise"[1]—notably in regard to the doctrine of Sympathy. A candid editor in Dr. Hyslop's place would have had regard to both works. There is plenty of room for corrective criticism in both. But Dr. Hyslop, who in effect charges Hume with either ignorance of philosophic history or wilful equivocation,[2] appears to be unaware that Locke was a determinist, as he speaks[3] of "Locke's theory of freedom." If this is a repetition of the blunder about Hume's freedom of action being freedom of will, it still shows the ignorance imputed, for Locke's position on freedom of action is simply that of his predecessors.

The charge against Hume of using the word 'reason' equivocally when arguing that reason does not sway volition is again put with animus. Hume is indeed chargeable, as we shall see, with speaking conventionally of reason as a detached faculty *sui generis* after recognizing it to be at bottom identical or cognate with instinct; but he used the word as it was normally used in his day. The Aristotelian and scholastic distinction between the intuitive and the discursive reason—to which Hume in any case could not have assented—was not in the minds or in the arguments of the chief thinkers of that generation—Locke,[4] Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Butler—who argued that reason could detect the right course in conduct.[5] 'Intuitive reason' would equate with Hutcheson's 'moral sense.' Dr. Hyslop's animus causes him to miss the real psychological problem, which he does not attempt to solve. Hume, while protesting against the common lax use of terms in philosophical discussion, avowedly shunned mere verbal disputes—it was on that ground that he called for non-ambiguous terminology—and was commonly content to write as he expected to be understood. And though he is often open to criticism for want of verbal circumspection, he was in this matter understood in his day as he meant to be.

Dr. Hyslop's own proposition that Hume's sceptical method "should not be used *too much* to discredit him," and that we should not "*unduly* depreciate the merits of his philosophy or *unfairly* burden scepticism with the responsibility for the world's intellectual errors [!] or practical ills,"[6] is an interesting modern example of the possibilities of unlucky misuse of

1 Clar. Press ed. of the *Inquiries*, 1894, introd, p. xxiii.
2 Ed. cited, introd. p. 42. 3 *Id.* p. 37.
4 As to Clarke, see Whewell's *Lectures*, p. 97 and *note*.
5 This Dr. Hyslop by implication admits, p. 48.
6 *Id.* p. 38.

language. It raises the question: To what kind of minds is it addressed?

In Hume's final handling of the problems of ethics three main principles stand out:—

1. Moral judgments either originate or ground in a *sentiment*—that is, they are not grounded on or derived from a process of argument.

2. They are seen to be largely shaped by perceptions of the *utility* of certain lines of conduct.

3. They are not, however, wholly self-regarding, but are in a considerable measure founded in *sympathy*.

On the face of the case, the first and second propositions are not co-ordinated, and neither are the second and third; and if any general criticism lies against Hume's ethic it is that he traced the three roots of morality separately and did not adequately set forth their relations. The roots are all there. The 'sentiment' principle covers all that is valid in 'moral sense' and 'intuitive reason' or 'à priori judgment' as explanations of the ostensibly à priori character of moral feeling; and the principle of 'sympathy' covers all that is valid in the contention of those who insist on 'disinterested feelings' as against the principle of egoism. 'Utility' in Hume's hands also covers the large ground that belongs to it, and even more. But how does 'utility' function alongside of spontaneous 'sentiment'? Is not the perception of utility *as such* a primary sentiment? If so, is the sentiment underlying moral judgment a simple *sentiment of utility?* If not, how does the perception of utility relate to it—as control or as reinforcement, as criticism or as counter-force? If, again, the perception of utility be reckoned a process of reason, what becomes of the denial of the ratiocinative origin of moral judgments? And how does sympathy differentiate from the judgment of utility on the one hand or the primary sentiment of moral distinctions on the other? It is only in an Appendix that Hume finally enables us to clear up the three-sided problem; and it seems certain that he came to his conclusion only after his second survey of the field. The unifying sentiment is finally shown to be "no other than a feeling for the happiness of mankind, and a resentment of their misery";[1] such sentiment yielding alike pleasure in men's individual gifts and graces and in the common well-being.

This means a partial return to Hutcheson, and a reversal of

[1] *Inquiry* on Morals, App. i.

positions taken up in the TREATISE. On one point he obviously changes his ground between the TREATISE and the INQUIRY—that, namely, of general benevolence. In the former we have the declaration[1] that *public interest*

> " is a motive too remote and too sublime to affect the generality of mankind and operate with any force in actions so contrary to private interest as are frequently those of justice and common honesty.
>
> " In general it may be affirmed that there is no such passion in human minds as the love of mankind merely as such, independent of personal qualities, of service, or of relation to oneself."

Here the definition is made so narrow as hardly to be discussible, but the earlier part of the passage obscures the fact that the burglar may be an enthusiastic patriot in time of war; and Hume's further remark that the " relation to ourself," which he admits to affect every one at times, " proceeds merely from sympathy," leaves the issue confused. In the INQUIRY it is settled by noting how we spontaneously applaud in others self-regarding (or ' selfish ') virtues such as temperance, patience, address, and foresight, in which case our approval is clearly disinterested :—

> " As qualities which tend only to the utility of their possessor, without any reference to us, or to the community, are yet esteemed and valued, by what theory or system can we account for this sentiment from self-love, or deduce it from that favourite origin? There seems here a necessity for confessing that the happiness and misery of others are not spectacles entirely indifferent to us; but that the view of the former, whether in its causes or effects, like sunshine on the prospect of well-cultivated plains, communicates a secret joy and satisfaction [and *vice versa*]. And this concession being once made, the difficulty is over."[2]

But there has also been a certain shifting of ground on the point of the functions of sentiment and reason. In the TREATISE reason is declared to have no influence whatever over the passions: it is rather their servant, functioning at their call.[3] Again, " if morality had naturally no influence on human passions and actions, 'twere in vain to take.....pains to inculcate it; and nothing would be more fruitless than that multitude of rules and precepts, with which all moralists abound.....*Morals* excite passions, and produce or prevent

[1] Bk. iii, pt. ii, sec. 1.
[2] *Inquiry* on Morals, sec. vi, pt. i, end. Compare the interesting passage in App. iv, on the esteem always accorded to good judgment and to courage in comparison with that given to moral qualities.
[3] Bk. ii, pt. iii, sec. 3.

actions. Reason of itself is utterly impotent in this particular. *The rules of morality therefore are not conclusions of our reason.*" [1]

In the second INQUIRY this summing-up substantially reappears:—

> "The distinct boundaries and offices of *reason* and of *taste* are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood; the latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue.....Reason, being cool and disengaged, is no motive to action, and *directs only the impulse received from appetite or inclination*, by *shewing us the means* of attaining happiness or avoiding misery: Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain, and thereby constitutes happiness or misery, *becomes* a motive to action, and *is* the *first* spring or *impulse* to *desire* and volition." [2]

There is some verbal difficulty here as to whether taste is to be conceived as structural constitution *causing* desire, or *as* desire. Apparently it is held to be the former, and we have three stages: (1) Constitution, causing (2) Desire, which causes (3) Volition. Again, there is difficulty as to whether desire always involves volition, or whether we are to distinguish between (*a*) preference and (*b*) the will to act in order to gratify the preference. The apparent meaning is that where taste is clear, desire is clear, and volition follows on that, save as determined by countervailing motives, such as fear (which, however, can again be regarded as a new expression of 'taste'). But there remains the general conception that structural bias or taste or propension determines in general a man's conduct, and that his reason is merely a means to enable him to gratify more effectually or successfully his decisive propension. And this seems to be implied in another proposition about sentiment in the same section:—

> "It appears evident that the *ultimate ends* of human actions can never in any case be accounted for by reason, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiments and affections of mankind, without any dependence on the intellectual faculties." [3]

That is to say, we *crave* our own good, our self-fulfilment, absolutely and inevitably, whatever acts we may do. This bias is instinctive, intuitive, à priori. But

> "In all determinations of morality the circumstance of public utility is ever principally in view, and *wherever disputes arise*, either in philosophy or common life, concerning the bounds of duty, the question cannot by any means be decided

[1] Bk. iii, pt. i, sec. 1.
[2] *Inquiry* on Morals, sec. ix, App. i, last par. Italics ours.
[3] *Id.* sec. ix, App. i.

with greater certainty than by ascertaining on any side *the true interests of mankind.* If any false opinion, embraced from appearances, has been found to prevail, as soon as further experience and sounder reasoning have given us juster notions of human affairs, we retract our first sentiment and *adjust anew the boundaries of moral good and evil.*"[1]

Now, if disputes can arise between persons, they may arise within oneself. An impecunious man may find a sum of money, and debate with himself whether he shall give it up to the police—or, if he happens to know who lost it, whether he shall give it to the owner. He has an inclination for the money which he needs. He has also an inclination to be honest. If he simply lets the latter inclination decide, he has acted on a 'sentiment,' which may have been instilled into him by his parents. In that case it is presumably to be described as an acquired taste. He obeys the inculcated rule, as he might obey an inculcated rule to 'keep the Sabbath day'—which clearly cannot have been a constitutional 'taste.' Again, he may say: 'If I lost money, I should resent the keeping of it by the finder; *therefore* I will do as I would be done by'; and he may act accordingly. In the latter case he is still acting on a sentiment: is he or is he not also proceeding on self-interest? It is admittedly 'moral' to do as we would be done by, though we may feel it to be to our interest so to act. On the other hand, to keep the money would be to his self-interest, and he may say: 'I never did lose money; I shall take care not to do so in future; then I shall have nothing to gain on that score, so I will keep this find. Besides, if I do lose money, there is no certainty that the finder of *that* will restore it; decidedly, then, I do well to keep this.' In that case he has preferred the immediate and certain self-interest to the remote and doubtful one.

But the question arises: Has he or has he not *reasoned* on his motives? Is it not by a process of reasoning that he decides for one as against another? Is not the question, 'Is this course to my interest?' a question of truth or falsehood, a question of fact, which Hume says reason deals with? Ostensibly it is, and reason has decided for him—shall we say, by showing to his desires their possibilities? But if, on further reflection, he says: 'My neighbours, or the loser, may discover that I have found this money, and then they will despise and denounce me; *therefore* I will not run the risk,' he has again decided *on a 'sentiment,'* which may again be regarded as a sentiment of self-interest. He has taken a wider view

[1] *Id.* sec. ii, pt. ii. Italics ours.

of utility, and decided on *this* ground that honesty is the best policy. But still he has reasoned on the circumstances, balancing one interest, or sentiment, or taste, against another, and deciding on the balance.

If, yet again, he says: 'This money would be a help to me, but the loser may suffer from the loss, I must *therefore* try to find him, or hand it over to the police,' he has acted upon a sentiment with a minimum of ratiocination, and will be by all men pronounced to have acted rightly or virtuously. If he had said: 'I will be honest *for the pleasure of being honest*,' he would not have been equally virtuous from the ordinary standpoint of honest men. The perfectly honest man will neither calculate his own pleasure nor stay to wonder whether the loser be rich or poor; he acts on his rule of absolute honesty. And here it is that Hume pronounces the motive to right conduct to be in essence a *sentiment towards others in general*. A very accurate reason or judgment, he observes, "is often requisite to give the true determination amidst.....intricate doubts arising from obscure or opposite utilities," as in questions of civil law.

> "But though reason, when fully assisted and improved, be sufficient to instruct us in the pernicious or useful tendency of qualities and actions, it is not alone sufficient to produce any moral blame or approbation. *Utility* [*i.e.* public as distinguished from private utility or self-interest] *is only a tendency to a certain end;* and were the end totally indifferent to us we should feel the same indifference towards the means. It is requisite a *sentiment* should here display itself, in order to give a preference to the useful above the pernicious tendencies. *This sentiment can be no other than a feeling for the happiness of mankind and a resentment of their misery*, since these are the different ends which virtue and vice have a tendency to promote. Here, therefore, *reason* instructs us in the several tendencies of actions, and *humanity* makes a distinction in favour of those which are useful and beneficial."[1]

Here Hume's relation to the Cudworth-Cumberland-Clarke school of theorists is sufficiently clear. All agree that reason decides on the fitness or utility of an action, whether to ourselves or to others. But the obligation to altruism, in Hume's argument, exists or operates only in respect of a disposition or bias to altruism; and here he puts the scientific truth which the others' argument either ignores or disposes of by mere censure. Hume, of course, joins in the censure, but he points out the futility of proclaiming obligation

[1] Appendix cited, par. 3. The words *sentiment*, *reason*, and *humanity* are italicized by Hume; the other italics are ours.

(*i.e. non-legal* obligation) where there is no response to the appeal. The question remains: How does he relate to the theory of Gay?

Unfortunately he never discusses Gay, and there is no certainty that he had read him, though it was Gay who had most decisively put the principle of association of ideas, which Hume accepts both in the TREATISE and in the INQUIRY. When he introduces the question of the 'self-love' theory in the INQUIRY[1] he observes that "the deduction of morals from self-love, or a regard to private interest, is an obvious thought, and has not arisen wholly from the wanton sallies and sportive assaults of the sceptics." But his rebuttal ignores Gay's explanation. "We frequently bestow praise," continues Hume, "on virtuous actions, performed in very distant ages and remote countries, where the utmost subtlety of imagination would not discover any appearance of self-interest.....It is but a weak subterfuge.....to say that we transport ourselves by the force of imagination into distant ages and countries, and consider the advantage which we should have reaped from these characters had we been contemporaries and had any commerce with the persons," and so on. Now, this is not a rebuttal of Gay, who simply argued that by association of ideas we praise action towards others which we should have praised if done towards us. Gay may be right or wrong, but he practised no subterfuge; and if Hume denies that association of ideas can so operate, it is hard to see how he can ascribe to it any moral operation at all. This he does in the late DISSERTATION ON THE PASSIONS, where he writes: "All *resembling*[2] impressions are *connected together*, and no sooner does one arise than the rest naturally follow."[3] For once, apparently, the 'spirit of system' had swayed Hume to overlook in ethics the operation of a mental law which he had happened to note in connection with non-ethical thought, but which he had no ground for confining to that.

Nor need he, for his ethical purpose, have denied the force of Gay's hypothesis. If the transference of approbation from our own case to that of others *be* a source of altruistic sentiment, the latter nevertheless remains a spontaneous sentiment, and so falls within Hume's own formula. *Was* Gay then right or wrong? To all appearance he was right, inasmuch as the transference *could* take place as he says. Not that that is the sole source of altruism. We have no ground for doubting that some organisms are by *constitution*

[1] Sec. v, pt. i.
[2] Hume's italics.
[3] *Dissertation*, sec. ii, § 3. Cp. *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, sec. v, pt. ii, par. 2.

much more altruistic than others, and can thus give a lead to the approbation of good actions. But inasmuch as Hume was actually drawing comfort from the wide play of other-regarding feeling as exemplified by the standing moral code, he was needlessly limiting his comfort if he denied that moral sentiment can arise out of egoism as Gay alleged.

It is curious that neither Gay nor Hume makes allusion to Cicero's favourite illustrations of Damon and Pythias, and of the universal response of the multitude in the theatre in the scene in which Pylades and Orestes each declare "I am Orestes," to save the other.[1] On Hume's view the applause of the mob in the theatre told of spontaneous feeling for others on the part of all. Were the Roman or the Athenian populace then in the mass born altruists, unlikely to fail in the daily duties of reciprocity? Did they not include the selfish, the dishonest, the average man incapable of supreme self-sacrifice? Is not Gay's theory the more explanatory?

Hume, in effect, interposes between egoism and sympathy the perception of public utility, making the act of approbation depend on the perception of the general utility of the good action. But what utility is attained by the supreme self-sacrifice if it be consummated? There is no more utility in the death of Pylades than in that of Orestes; the question simply does not arise. The one answer open to Hume is that, feeling benevolence towards others, we applaud him who shows it in a supreme degree; and that answer leans to Gay's side; for he could reply that if we especially applaud in another the act which we know would call for the utmost conceivable devotion on our own part, the approbation is 'founded' on self-love. And, in passing, we have disposed of Hume's argument that we cannot transport ourselves in imagination to past ages and there applaud what, in respect of subsumed self-interest, we should applaud to-day. The Roman populace did that very thing. Hume, in short, erred with all those who assume that to trace the sentiment of morality to a *root* in self-interest is to degrade and impoverish it, as if 'derive from' meant 'identify with.' Injury to morality can never be done by a theory of its genesis. The risk of injury begins when we specify duties, or when by homologating a social system we implicitly deny that duties not there recognized ought to be done. And that 'injury' has been done by probably every moralist in turn.

The theological 'intellectualists' on their part, be it remembered,

[1] *De Finibus*, v, 22; also ii, 24; and *De Amicitia*, 7.

argued that morality was degraded by being reduced to a foundation in 'mere' sentiment instead of in reason. Instinct, they declared, and not unjustly, is a perilous and an inadequate ground for a moral system. Hume in effect agrees when he shows how much reasoning is needed to guide the sentiment of right and wrong.[1] But what then is the point of his saying that reason, 'being cool and disengaged, is no motive to action,' and cannot *control will?* It is idle here to meet him by saying that intuitive reason (which equates with his 'sentiment') perceives right and wrong; he could answer that *such* intuition is just instinct under another name; that the instinct or intuitive reason of the savage sees right and wrong in a very different way from that of the philosopher; and that *discursive* or deliberative reason is requisite for the rectification of the ignorant à priori judgment. The real crux is: If reason rectifies and guides the moral sentiment, thus altering desire, what is meant by denying to it influence over the will?

The question, it will be at once seen, is really one of psychology, and strictly speaking does not belong to ethics. But it has been there imposed. We saw how Spinoza at one stage declared that only emotion could overrule emotion, and at another that reason could do all that emotion did. Hume probably had that dilemma in mind when he expressly argued that there are 'calm passions' which operate precisely as reason does, and thereby mislead us into supposing that reason controls emotion. But this only enhances the perplexity. If the calm passion, as Hume says, differs only in degree from the violent, *and can pass into that*, what *fact* is represented by saying that the calm passion, which functions as reason does, is entirely distinct from reason? What ground have we for discriminating reason as a separate 'faculty' from emotion unless it be that in the mental states so named we mentally do very different things? Reason, on any view, is not an organ, like a hand; it is a state of mind in which we compare propositions or facts and judge of them. The *ego* sensates; it also desires, wills, feels, and reasons. To individualize one state or process and call it a faculty is a convenience with which we cannot ordinarily dispense; but when the convention is tacitly taken as a means of affirming and denying ethical theories it must be closely looked to. And if, as Hume says, 'calm passion' (or emotion) compares and judges, is it not equally true to say that violent reason does so?

An angry man judges and plans angrily.[2] When Hume says in

[1] *Inquiry*, sec. 1.
[2] Cp. the *Treatise*, bk. ii, pt. iii, sec. 3 (Selby-Bigge's ed. p. 415).

the TREATISE that reason is the slave of the passions he presumably describes the procedure in question. But when, either by a purely physical process or as a result of a particular attention to facts, the anger passes away, the angry man may greatly modify his judgments and entirely alter his plans. Reason then at one moment passes a particular judgment, and soon afterwards an opposite one; is it then in both states the same 'faculty'? If we say that at first it misses important facts and afterwards contemplates them, shall we next say that it is memory that had been at fault in failing to present all the relevant facts in the first case? On that view reason would be a faculty that does not command the faculty of memory; whereas the use of memory is a condition of its normal action. But if, once more, we say with Hume that 'calm passions' act as reason does, comparing and judging, what ground is there for continuing to individualize reason as a faculty at all? Should we not rather say that violent emotion reasons badly or imperfectly, whereas calm emotion reasons better because it takes more facts into account—better, that is, for the general purposes of life, though not better from the point of view of the angry man?

Evidently what Hume had in mind when he called reason the slave of the passions is that when actively thinking at all we are always desiring something. When we are calmly reasoning we are desiring to know the truth; for that is a 'desire' like another; that is to say, it is an emotion, a 'calm passion.' But as Hume had himself affirmed in so many words in the TREATISE: "To consider the matter aright reason is nothing but a wonderful and intelligible *instinct* in our souls, which carries us along a certain train of ideas."[1] The true synthesis then is that the *ego* varies in its judgments as it varies in its desires; in other words, that a man's ethic tends to vary with his temper. That is the simple explanation of the general failure to make the Golden Rule as much a matter of course as our recognition of our physical relations to nature. In the mood of truth-seeking we recognize the principle; in other moods, swayed by other desires, we forget or ignore it. Hence, obviously, the need for a set of *rules* of conduct, based on the perception of our *permanent* relations to each other, which, within our community, are relations of peace. And, having thus realized that while our moral judgments originate in 'sentiment,' and that sentiment not only varies but represents (1) habits of thinking inculcated in us, (2) habits which proceed on the assump-

[1] *Treatise*, bk. i, pt. iii, sec. 16, *end*.

tion that what is legal is right, and (3) habits set up by calculations of public utility which were made by ancestors more ignorant than ourselves, we conclude that a constant reconsideration of public utilities is the only way to keep 'morality' satisfyingly 'moral'—that is, *conformable to the sentiment of reciprocity* in the form in which we hold it in our calmest state, when we most purely desire to know the truth as to the best rules of life for ourselves and others. For sentiment does not at all disappear when we realize that sentiment needs regulation. The realization is itself a sentiment.

This is the truth underlying Spinoza's dictum, endorsed by Hume, that emotion is to be controlled by emotion. But emotion, conceived under a mental aspect, is a state of 'feeling' *in combination with* judgments, which are the expression of desires; those judgments, again, are complexes of ideas; and it is the ideas, the judgments, the desires, that really differentiate the emotions. Nor can 'reason' be rightly thought of, any more than emotion, as disconnected from perceptions, ideas, desires; apart from these there is no faculty of judging. And as will is, in the words of Hobbes, simply "the last appetite (or aversion) in deliberating,"[1] it is just as true to say that reason influences will as to say that emotion influences it—if we are to individualize either reason or emotion. If reason influences emotion it influences will thereby. For the purposes of ethics we must realize that 'the whole man thinks,' just as we must further realize that moral thinking involves the recognition of other people with their relations to us. It is precisely in the degree of their recognition of these relations *as moral* that men *are* more or less moral. The immoral (or less moral) man, like the other, thinks of himself in relation to others because he cannot help it: the difference is that he does not think of them as having claims which permanently enter into the relation. That is to say, he lacks, or feels only intermittently, the 'sentiment' which gives moral quality to rules of conduct. Nay, as we all feel it, *in its fullness*, only intermittently, the true account of him is that he either lacks it altogether or feels it seldomest. And while we guard against him as best we can by law, or by avoidance, the fact remains that in so far as he conforms to law we have next to no hold of him save by disapprobation or ostracism, to which he will respond just so far as these are for him evils which he is concerned to escape. To speak to him of obligation is idle, since in

[1] *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. 6, near end.

the terms of the case he does not recognize it, lacking the condition which makes it imperative in the extra-legal relation. What shall make an ungrateful man grateful? He is, in fact, like the criminal, a special incarnation of the evil which in some degree is n us all.

To this view of ethics we attain as a result of the assimilation of what is true in Hume and in his predecessors. Henceforth we need not concern ourselves otherwise than incidentally with the genesis or derivation of morality: we are not likely to discover fundamental considerations which have not faced us either in the survey of pre-philosophic moral evolution or in the study of the philosophic systems. We have so far settled the problem that, while recognizing a sentiment of reciprocity as at once the permanent motive and *a* permanent test of conduct, it has now become our business to settle *how* we can best fulfil the precept of reciprocity, or how we can fulfil it without losing our zest for it—for that is one of the considerations which will face us when we come to details of delimitation. And that is the same thing as to say that we must *apply the test of utility in combination with that of reciprocity.*

For, here again, there can be no isolation of the two concepts in ethical thought. The previous strife of systems is resolved (so far as it is not theological) by recognizing both tests. It is not merely that utility is a test of rightness: rightness, or justice, is also a test of utility; and justice is a statement of our own claims in relation to the claims of others. About utility there can be mistake and dispute, as about any à priori moral doctrine so-called; mistake of deduction as well as mistake of plan. Hume makes a fairly obvious mistake of deduction when he says that the special obligation of chastity laid upon women by the social code of most civilized countries is a result of the perception of the special utility of female chastity to society. The judgment in question takes the form of a *censure;* and that censure goes back beyond any calculation of utility, to the primary sense of the male's *property* in his females. It is primarily an expression of masculine egoism, socially codified by men regarding themselves as a caste in contradistinction to women, but long acquiesced in by the majority of the other sex. As ethical criticism developes, that assumption is challenged by both men and women as an anomaly; and to meet it by a plea of utility is at once to clash with the principle of reciprocity and make the utilitarian test suspect of immorality. The alleged utility is an afterthought, like the arguments to defend ritual cannibalism in a community in which it has grown unsavoury. And in the end the

false utility is checkmated by the true; even as the one-sided sex sentiment is superseded by the two-sided sentiment.

Obviously, if it be useful to society that women should be chaste, it cannot be useful that men should be otherwise, whether as regards women de-classed—a terrible social inutility—or as regards the women who, *ex hypothesi*, ought to be chaste. To say this is not to pretend to have attained or pointed to a permanent solution, legal or social. The sex instinct is in all likelihood the most permanently unmanageable of all human impulses. International strife may conceivably be prevented by international agreement, and the economic struggle solved by regulation of births and by socialization of wealth, while the sex impulse will still be a source of acute individual unhappiness as it is a source of acute happiness. To forecast the possible attempts at solution will be a thankless task while there remains at work any ethical belief that subordinates alike the tests of reciprocity and of utility to a formally à priori principle which merely stereotypes an early norm of practice. Of course when the rigid practice is defended on grounds of utility that test is recognized. But in no connection are ultimate utilities harder to calculate; for, as we have seen and shall see, social utility can be conceptually transmuted into a principle that has become non-moral by ignoring all individual claims as such, and making society a mere abstraction. A concept of social utility can thus become the ideal consummation of inutility.

> We thus seem to have reached the point of recognizing that each one of the theories of the origin and basis of morality pointed to *some* truth—that 'moral sense' and 'conscience' pointed to the ostensibly intuitive aspect of judgments not intuitive; that the 'selfish theory' pointed to the fundamental or primary derivation of all ethic from self-regard; that upon this root, nevertheless, there grows up a real feeling for others; and that 'utility' points at once to a main generative factor of moral ideas and a main (though not the only) test in case of dispute. But it is still necessary to guard against lapsing into the errors of exclusiveness or system-mongering which have in all ages so embroiled and protracted ethical debate. It is one of Hume's great merits to have sought his solutions dispassionately, and to have seen that there was truth on both sides of the main skirmish. If he had but carried out his analysis of the concept of reason as he did that of causation, instead of falling back on the current conventional one, he would probably have anticipated Spencer's conclusion that reason and emotion are not to be ultimately distinguished as two independent 'faculties,' differing somewhat as taste and smell,

but are cognate developments of mental function. In his Note[1] on Reason and Experience he in effect does retract the ostensibly absolute distinction which he, like others, had drawn between them as two disparate sources of judgment when he repeatedly wrote that the concept of causation is reached "by experience, *not* by reasoning."[2] He was thus on the track of an analysis which could well have carried him past the received convention as to reason and feeling.

It is, however, extremely hard for even a highly gifted thinker to carry on an analysis in which all of his main terms are under solution at once; and Hume was not sufficiently sensitive on the side of terminology to detect all the snares of the situation. Thus, when he argues that in the accepted sequences of cause and effect we perceive only *conjunction*, not *connection*, he is using synonyms without asking himself why and how he differentiates them. Conjunction *is* connection. In terms of his argument there could be no 'connection' in any mental sequence; yet, apart from this argument, he constantly uses 'connection' as a significant term in matters of thought. This snare of ascribing unquestionable significance to one term, in a discussion in which terms on all fours with it are disintegrated, is perhaps one of the most fertile sources of fallacy in all philosophy. It enters into every phase and stage of ethical discussion; and the mental proclivity for which it stands is seen operating similarly in the frequent re-instalment of concepts by philosophers who have formally excommunicated them.

For Hume it may be claimed that, whatever his philosophic inadequacies, he in a fuller degree than Locke brought into British philosophy a temper of sheer disinterested intellectual scrutiny. Against his claims on that head there are charged upon him not only his tranquil oppugnancy to the 'zealots' (which still elicits singular censures from enlightened academics, conscious, if not of faith, yet of the presence of vested interests and official conformities), but (1) his nominal adherence to theism after he had privately composed a treatise in which theism is reduced to a very vague hypothesis, and (2) the letters in which he expressed a vehement animosity to the English public of his day.[3] It is, of course, no vindication of Hume as a philosopher that he was responding to the raucous insolence which the England of that day so plentifully bestowed on Scots and Frenchmen alike. (The publisher, Millar, who assured Hume that the English were hostile only to Lord Bute, was amiably falsifying the case. No man with a Scotch accent could be long in London in those days without being insulted.) Huxley's suggestion (p. 40), more crudely put by Dr. Hyslop

[1] Note B to the first *Inquiry*. [2] First *Inquiry*, sec. v, pt. i. etc.
[3] See the letters cited by Huxley, *Hum*, ch. ii.

(introd. cited, p. 10), that Hume was angry because his books did not sell in England, is plainly astray; his HISTORY OF ENGLAND was then selling very well. In so far as there was any depth of anger in his invective, the fit comment is that he should have remembered how his own people in the past had regarded the English. But the invective really stands for two things, a vein of humour (habitual with Hume in friendly correspondence) turned for the moment to spleen; and a certain perturbability of personal as distinguished from philosophic judgment, not absent from many philosophers' lives.

The formal imposition of theism on the INQUIRY CONCERNING MORALS,[1] though, like so many such declarations, it has no more bearing on the argument than would attach to the phrase "order of nature," is in fairness to be taken as showing that Hume in 1751 had not made up his mind against theism, and in later editions was unwilling to make a deletion that would probably distress some friends and evoke attacks such as he had never before incurred. He was not of the heroic temper. But he is not quite consistently to be denounced for writing against one set of religious delusions and also for not going further and attacking another.

[1] App. i, end. This is the position noted above, p. 255, as incumbent on theistic ethics.

Chapter VII

FROM HARTLEY TO PALEY

§ 1. *Hartley.* (*Christian Materialism.*)

The curious ferment of thought which marks the first two generations of the eighteenth century in Britain is nowhere more singular than in the Observations on Man of Dr. David Hartley (1748), who intervenes between the two versions of Hume's philosophy. He is the Parson Adams of speculation, propounding the most materialistic account of man thitherto produced, grounding all mental processes in 'vibrations,' deducing a system of morals from a calculation of utilities, and with consummate philosophical incoherence imposing on the whole a dogmatic statement of the Christian creed, after a pretence of examining Christian evidences which exhibits not a glimmer of scientific understanding of what the principles of evidence require. Where Butler saw difficulties, Hartley sees none. But where Butler convulsively assailed the doctrine of determinism in the supposed interests of morals, Hartley with entire tranquillity shows that the doctrine of 'philosophical free-will' is irreligious, anti-theistic, and otherwise untenable, while determinism is perfectly consistent with morality. He is the *enfant terrible* of Christian apologetics for his age.

When Priestley, the next eminent Christian materialist, re-issued Hartley's treatise, much abridged, in 1775, he explained that it had been "clogged with a whole system of moral and religious knowledge, which, however excellent, is in a great measure foreign to it." Modern expositors, on the other hand, justly decide that Hartley's physiological doctrine of 'vibrations,' being a pure speculation, is logically detached from his doctrine of the association of ideas, which best stands on its own feet,[1] as in James Mill's later restatement of it. The physiological theory is in any case outside ethics. What remains is (1) an exposition of the doctrine of association that is never co-ordinated with ethics as distinct from an analysis of the 'affections,' and (2) a utilitarian scheme of ethics, as aforesaid,

[1] G. S. Bower, *Hartley and James Mill*, 1881, p. 28.

quite arbitrarily clamped to a didactic system of 'theopathy' and scripturalism.

Hartley candidly avows in his Preface that he got his starting-point, the law of the association of ideas, from Gay, whom he is the first to name as the author of the anonymous Dissertation prefixed to Law's translation of King. He seems further to have read the INQUIRY of 1747, above ascribed to Gay;[1] at least, the proposition there laid down,[2] that "A creature is ultimately happy the sum of whose happiness surpasses the sum of its misery, and to such an one existence must be deemed a blessing," figures in the OBSERVATIONS. As to free-will, on which he divides from Gay, Hartley tells us: "I was not at all aware that [the doctrine of *necessity*] followed from association for several years after I had began my inquiries; nor did I admit it at last without the greatest reluctance." His adoption of it was on the whole his main practical service to ethical thought, for his application of the principle of utility soon breaks down. Benevolence, he tells us, yields the highest happiness, so that "we are forced to direct every action so as to produce the greatest happiness and the least misery in our power."[3] But immediately he falls back on the position of Berkeley and Butler that "it is impossible for the most sagacious and experienced persons to make any accurate estimate of the future consequence of particular actions so as.....to determine justly which action would contribute most to augment happiness and lessen misery." We must accordingly fall back on less general rules, and "the first rule is obedience to the Scripture precepts, in the natural, obvious, and popular meaning"—though "there is the same sort of difficulty in applying them accurately to particular cases," and further rules are supplied as checks. Of these the eighth is that "we ought to be principally solicitous about the establishment and promotion of true and pure religion," including missionary enterprise.

Hartley's practical ethic is, in short, that of current Christianity, with strong protest against the corruption and worldliness of the clergy. He in fact declares at length that "it is probable that all the present civil governments will be overturned"[4] because of their irreligiousness; that "the present forms of church government will be dissolved"[5] because "they have all left the true, pure, simple religion"; and that "the Jews will be restored to Palestine."

[1] In his Preface, dated December, 1748, Hartley says he was informed "about eighteen years ago" that the Rev. Mr. Gay "then living" asserted the possibility of deducing all our intellectual pleasures and pains from association. This suggests that Gay was not alive at the end of 1748.

[2] Vol. cited, p. 169.

[3] *Observations*, pt. ii, ch. iii, sec. vi, prop. 70 (ed. 1834, p. 504).

[4] Pt. ii, ch. iv, sec. 2, prop. 81, p. 549.

[5] Prop. 82, p. 551.

Christianity, further, is to be "preached to and received by all nations," but[1] "it is not probable that there will be any pure or complete happiness before the destruction of this world by fire," whereafter the wicked will suffer both spiritually and corporeally for a time, while the good have a quite spiritual happiness. In conclusion, six things "seem more especially to threaten ruin and dissolution to the present states of Christendom":—(1) Atheism and infidelity, particularly among the governing classes; (2) "the open and abandoned lewdness" of many of both sexes in the upper classes; (3) the "sordid and avowed self-interest" which almost solely rules public men; (4) the utter licentiousness and insubordination of the lower orders; (5) "the great worldly-mindedness of the clergy" and their "gross neglect" of duty; and (6) disregard of education by parents and magistrates. The believers in natural religion are no better than the clergy, and when Christianity goes all will go; the final moral being that: "If we refuse to let Christ reign over us as our Redeemer and Saviour, we must be slain before his face as enemies at his second coming."

Such was the forecast of human prospects by the Christian materialist, who is sometimes certificated as the soul of benevolence and even credited with "easy-going *laissez-faire* tendencies."[2] In his religious aspect he does not belong to philosophy at all. Yet he probably counted for something in helping the general current of thought towards a rational as opposed to a theological conception of morals. Undoubtedly he furthered to some extent the acceptance of the principle of idea-association; and in teaching, confusedly enough, that the 'moral sense' is somehow 'begotten' in us by associations of experience he reinforced the scientific method. But he is incredibly confused. He is capable of arguing (1) that we must not seek "the pleasures of honour," but practise benevolence, which will secure us the maximum of honour; and (2) that the encomiums bestowed upon acts of benevolence are "one of the principal *sources* of the moral sense"—upon the prompting of which we are to *be* benevolent.[3] And though he stipulates that "the rule of life deducible from the practice and opinions of mankind" "corrects and improves itself perpetually," he has no corrective principles to apply to the national policy, though, like Mandeville, he leans to vegetarianism upon a humane sentiment, and urges, with as little prospect of acceptance in the England of that day, the restriction of alcoholic liquors to medicinal purposes.

[1] Prop. 85, p. 557 [2] Bower, as cited, p. 6. [3] Prop. 63, pp. 484-85.

§ 2. *Brown.* (*Theological Utilitarianism.*)

In 1751 the Rev. John Brown published his ESSAYS ON THE CHARACTERISTICS (*i.e.* on the work of Shaftesbury so entitled); in 1754 and 1756 he produced two historical dramas, in one of which Garrick played with success; in 1757–58 appeared his ESTIMATE OF THE MANNERS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE TIMES; and in 1766 he committed suicide. In the dedication of the ESSAYS the author explains that when Shaftesbury "took it into his head to oppose the solid wisdom of the gospel by the wisdom of false philosophy," the best he could do "was only to tell us how Plato wrote," whereas the Christian author, writing in the cause of truth and Christianity, has "the advantage of realizing all I say in bidding the world take notice how YOU [the patron] live. In a word," he goes on, "I was willing to bring the question to a short issue and show by a known example to what an elevation true Christianity can exalt human nature. Till, therefore, philosophic Taste can produce a parallel effect, Religion must bear the palm, and Christianity, like her parent Wisdom, will be justified of her children." Six years later, according to the hyperbolical Macaulay, the author, in his ESTIMATE, "fully convinced his readers that they were a race of cowards and scoundrels; that nothing could save them; that they were on the point of being enslaved by their enemies, and that they richly deserved their fate."[1] It is rather remarkable that such a diversely-minded writer should be singled out by J. S. Mill[2] as having produced in the ESSAYS a very able argument for utilitarianism.

In point of fact, Brown's theological utilitarianism gives only a preliminary support to the rational utilitarianism of Hume and Mill. He argues very explicitly that the real and ultimate test of virtue is the general promotion of human happiness, pointing out that Clarke, Wollaston, and Hutcheson all finally accept it. Affections normally virtuous become vicious when they oppose "the greatest public happiness"; and actions "most shocking to every humane affection lose at once their moral deformity when they become subservient to the general welfare, and assume both the name and nature of virtue."[3] In fine, "those actions which we denominate virtuous, beautiful, fit, or true, have not any absolute and independent, but a relative and reflected beauty."[4] Shaftesbury and Mandeville, he argues, are alike wrong in their contrary

[1] First Essay on Chatham: *Essays*, ed. 1856, i, 302. Brown's book appeared, not, as Macaulay asserted, "at the outset of the most glorious war in which England was ever engaged," but when the war was going very badly.
[2] Essay on Bentham, reprinted in the *Dissertations and Discussions*, 1859, i, 345.
[3] *Essays* cited, 1751, Essay ii, sec. 3, pp. 130–35. [4] *Id.*, p. 136.

positions, because both ignore the test of public happiness [which is not strictly true of either], Shaftesbury standing upon an arbitrary concept of moral beauty, and Mandeville arguing that vice and virtue are mere varying conventions. Utility gives the missing test, and the *general* agreement as to *some* actions proves that it is the test universally applied.

But Brown here puts to the hazard his own solution. After insisting that we can have no motive to moral action save *our own* happiness, immediate or future, he as confidently contends that the active practice of virtue, as distinguished from innocence, has no guarantee of happiness in this life,[1] and that consequently the real basis of morality is the belief in future rewards and punishments, which is the essence of religion.[2] Now, the distinction between active and passive virtue is beside the case, for innocence is no more than active virtue immune from injustice. And if the final test is the prospect or promise of happiness in a future state, the issue is shifted altogether from the ground of rational ethics to that of the problem: Which is the true religion? And here the Mandevillian may, if he will, open a murderous return fire. As thus:—

"First you tell us that the *agreements* in the varying moral codes of the various countries prove a common principle—the pursuit of public happiness. This nobody had disputed. Do you, in turn, dispute that the vicious man seeks his own happiness equally with the virtuous? If not, to what purpose did you (superciliously enough) make that particular reply to Mandeville?

"Had you simply argued that, while communities by their laws and policies, as men by their acts, seek their own happiness, but may and do mistake it, you would still not be confuting Mandeville; but you would have faced towards the practical problem which he faced in his own way: How can a community best seek its collective happiness? But, while positively affirming that happiness is the all-deciding motive of action and at the same time its decisive test, you are not prepared, nay, you refuse, to seek through any calculation of human utilities a code for either communities or individuals.

"For you proceed to tell us that the *active* pursuit of virtue (which, by your own principles, is carried on with a view to happiness) will *not* secure it, nay, will certainly yield unhappiness to the seeker. Yet you imply that he *ought* to pursue virtue, knowing (on your testimony) that it will bring him a vexation of spirit which (you allege) is escaped by the *innocently* inactive man. Your experience has indeed been in one respect happy, if you never saw the innocent man (or woman) oppressed. But let us agree that the actively virtuous man incurs malice, and knows he does.

[1] *Id.* sec. 8, p. 198. [2] *Id.* sec. 9, p. 210.

"Your solution is that he knows (else he will not be virtuous) that in a future state he will be made happy, while the malicious man and all the other evil-doers will be made wretched. To that state apparently the passively virtuous have hardly a title: on your view, they have had their happiness here. But whatever becomes of them, the future state, it is clear, will be chiefly populated with the wicked, who are to go on suffering their due misery *in sæcula sæculorum*. For, by all accounts, the good are a very small minority. The ultimate happiness of the many, then, is the one thing never contemplated by your deity in his scheme of things.

"Yet it is upon your faith in the beneficent purposes of the deity thus presented that you would have us (by implication) reduce our moral codes to that which you professionally present to us as inspired by him. It is not indeed clear that you point to any written code. The drift of your argument often appears to be that all men know at least their main duties, but that most will not do them save from hope of reward or under fear of penalty; and that, inasmuch as human laws cannot reward and in many matters cannot duly punish, an all-embracing supernatural system of rewards and punishments is requisite. But if you leave it at that, you evade the fact that, as you have admitted, nations vary greatly *on some points* in their notions of right and wrong. Thus varying, they continue to vary while believing in the future rewards and penalties with the prospect of which you propose to control them.

"But if, on the other hand, you really point, as one would expect, to the written code of your religion, new perplexities arise. To say nothing of the fact that the alleged revealed code is a chaos, in which the command to kill all 'witches' co-exists with a command to love your enemies (neither of which things are you prepared to do), you have still to face the fact that the *religions* of mankind vary even as do their moral codes or customs. And they *all* claim that their religions are divinely revealed. And as all those religions in some fashion aim at controlling conduct, and many seek to do it by positing future rewards and punishments just as you do, we come to this double problem: (1) Does not the creed of future rewards and punishments everywhere fail to make men conform uniformly to what they *admit* to be right rules of conduct? and (2) Does not the creed of future rewards and punishments even propose *wrong* rules of action—persecution, self-mortification, cruel punishments, human sacrifice, religious wars, falsehood towards heretics?

"When, then, after dismissing the teachings of Lord Shaftesbury as cobweb speculations, inapplicable to humanity as we know it, you profess to lay your finger[1] on 'the real motives by which mankind may be swayed to the *uniform* practice of *virtue*' (the italics are yours), are you serious? Of mankind you proceed[2] to give this account:—

"'*Weak* or *no* benevolence [we follow your abundant

[1] Sec. ix, p. 206. [2] *Id.* p. 208.

italics], a moral sense proportionably *dull*, strong sensual *appetites*, a clamorous train of *selfish* affections, these mixed and varied in endless combinations form the real character of the *bulk* of mankind, not only in *cottages*, but in *cities*, *churches*, *camps*, *and courts*.'

"This you say while repeatedly censuring Shaftesbury for speaking of the 'mere vulgar.' Then you tell us[1] that while the brutes have instinct to keep them right, and man has not, 'to *remedy* this defect.....providence hath afforded him not only a sense of present but a foresight of future good and evil.' Here you become somewhat incoherent. It would seem to follow that by the alleged foresight men *know* that they will be rewarded or punished; but what you actually say[2] is that nothing *can* convince mankind that their happiness depends on promoting the happiness of others but the 'lively and active belief' in an all-seeing and all-powerful God who will reward or punish them 'according as they designedly promote or violate the happiness of their fellow-creatures.'

"Are we then to suppose that in your opinion the bulk of mankind in Christendom have not *held* this belief for a thousand years past? It seems incredible that you should have such an opinion. But if you really hold that in the eighteenth century of Christianity the bulk of men in Christendom have *not* the requisite belief, what are we to think of the practicality which you constantly claim, by implication, for your doctrine as against my Lord Shaftesbury's? If his system be a cobweb, what, reverend sir, is yours?

"Either you believe that the bulk of men around you have the proper faith in heaven and hell or you believe that they have not. If they have not, they are evidently as insensitive to the universally preached doctrine as you declare them to be to the Shaftesburyan sentiment of the beauty of goodness. If, on the other hand, you recognize them to *hold* the belief which you say *can* sway them 'to the *uniform* practice of virtue,' how come them to be the creatures you have just described? And how comes the world to be the scene of misconduct which you see and know and declare it to be?

"To what purpose are you occupying our time? Writing forty years after Shaftesbury, can you do no better than bluster against his cobweb in order to make way for your own smoke? And what, when all is said, do you suppose you have really made out against Mandeville? Did not he give you what you professionally wanted when he affirmed this very need of the heaven-hell doctrine for the populace? Did you suppose him to be averse from punishing theft and murder, or more partial to liars than to honest men?"

Further pressure, such as might have been put by the eighteenth-century Mandevillian, may be spared. Brown is a 'utilitarian' who professedly does not believe in the utility of a humanist ethic; who

[1] *Id.* p. 209.

[2] *Id.* p. 210.

conceives men as seeking their collective happiness and yet not seeing in that happiness a motive for the requisite common action, in the absence of an eternity of bliss for the more or less good and bale for the more or less bad—who are by admission the vast majority. And all this *in the name* of the principle of the happiness of the mass. He is thus but one more testimony to the power of creed for the paralysis of the reasoning faculty in men of good natural parts—for he can argue at times with real efficiency as against Shaftesbury's ill-conceived thesis that ridicule is the test of truth. His ESTIMATE, with its practical pessimism, and his suicide, suggest a deeper sincerity than that of the cleric of the ESSAYS impeaching the assailant of priesthoods; but they do not cancel the verdict of scientific and philosophic failure, Mill notwithstanding.

Nor does even the ESTIMATE exhibit any depth of intellectual as distinguished from temperamental sincerity. There he pronounces that "the *three* great principles which curb the selfish passions and sway the manners of men are those of religion, honour, and public spirit."[1] Religion, he declares, now no longer counts among the educated: "taste hath now generally supplanted religious principle." Shaftesbury had apparently won the day! For the rest, the thesis is that trade, bringing wealth, corrupts public spirit and produces effeminacy; and that England is thus corrupted, while France, having much less commerce and wealth, remains strong and efficient. What is now wanted to save "a despairing nation" is (not a revival of religion but) "the wisdom, the integrity, and unshaken courage of SOME GREAT MINISTER."[2] If Pitt thus "saved" England, the moral problem would seem to have been thus very simply disposed of. But Brown's suicide in 1766 suggests another conclusion.

That ground was gained by the theological utilitarianism which he championed, however, may be inferred from various data. In 1756 it was set forth by Soame Jenyns in that "Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil" of which the memory is preserved by Dr. Johnson's memorable Review. Jenyns, propounding the doctrine of Shaftesbury and Pope that partial evil must be universal good because of the known benevolence of deity, blandly scolded all unhappy people for not seeing as much, while arguing that nobody was really very unhappy; and Johnson, grimly observing that "this author and Pope perhaps never saw the miseries which they imagine thus easy to be borne," not very blandly scolded Jenyns for his

[1] *Estimate*, ed. 1758, ii, 82. (Pt. i, sec. 12.)

[2] *Id.* end of vol. i.

inane optimism. Still more notable is his rejection of Jenyns's complacent ruling (echoed from Mandeville and common prejudice) that the poor should be left uneducated lest they should be made discontented. Johnson is here liberal beyond his age and above his party, and truly ethical where Burke was not. But the author and the critic agreed perfectly in rejecting the old formulas of conformity to truth, or the fitness of things, or the will of God, as definitions of virtue, and in insisting that the criterion of conduct is its results, in happiness or misery. Jenyns added that, while the production of happiness is the essence of virtue, its "great end" is the giving men the opportunity of "exalting or degrading themselves in another state by their behaviour in the present"; and Johnson added further that by reason of the difficulty in many cases of forecasting consequences "it was proper that revelation should lay down a rule to be followed invariably in opposition to appearances" —a rule which, nevertheless, he knew had not been given. Theological utilitarianism was thus set forth by both, apparently with general acquiescence.

Incidentally, both repudiate the Stoic doctrine of the "innate beauty of virtue" as being "unmeaning nonsense." This attack presumably had reference to the Dialogue on Happiness published in 1744 by James Harris, one of the most learned men of his day, who sat in Parliament from 1761 till his death in 1780, holding various offices. The dialogue (one of three) is formally Socratic, one speaker doing nearly all the argument, and the other exhausting the ways of saying Yes and No. It is certainly not unmeaning nonsense, being a connected argument to demonstrate that no external good can be reckoned sovereign, and that that title can be given only to an inward sense of worth, which can consist only in the sense of rectitude. The wealthy author, who was thus anticipating the doctrine of perfection as the end and criterion of conduct which has found so much favour in later times, was doubtless quite sincere in making small account of objective well-being.[1] But a doctrine which served to sustain the Stoics in an age of dominant tyranny, and which avails as an ideal for the self-regarding sage in any age, was no arresting message for one moving towards the mood of social reconstruction, and therefore concerned more to settle what social rectitude positively meant than to dwell on the charm of the *mens conscia recti* as attainable by the individual. And even Harris noted the supremacy of the social relation as the

[1] *Three Treatises*, ed. 1772, pp. 111, 180.

moral determinant,[1] here echoing Shaftesbury and giving a cue to moralists of the next generation.

§ 3. *Price.* (*Return to Apriorism.*)

What the anti-rationalists term 'independent morality' found a somewhat notable representative in the Welsh Nonconformist minister Richard Price (1723–1791), who, after winning some philosophical repute by his REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONS OF MORALS (1758), became much more prominent as a writer on politics, particularly in support of the American Revolution, and of the French in its early stages. In ethics he is notable as reverting to an à priori position which is neither that of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, nor that of the Cudworth or Clarke school, nor that of Butler, but in some degree anticipates that of Kant. He did not, however, attain to a rounded system.

At the outset he posits "three different perceptions concerning moral agents": (1) that of right and wrong; (2) that of beauty and deformity; (3) that which "we express when we say that actions are of good and ill desert." As regards the first, he claims to differentiate himself from Hutcheson, who, he says, posits "an implanted and arbitrary principle." His own position is that "some actions we all feel ourselves *irresistibly determined* to approve, and others to disapprove." This, he says, we do by "the understanding,"[2] which is a "power of *immediate perception*,"[3] that "*gives rise* to new original ideas." But already he has declared[4] that sense and understanding are totally different faculties of the soul, in that sense is conversant "*only* about particulars, the other *only* about universals." The contradiction here is absolute. The understanding is alternately alleged to deal only with universals and to make immediate perceptions of right and wrong in given actions. If it be contended that a judgment of right and wrong *is* a judgment of universals, inasmuch as it implies that all actions come under those two categories (which is not the fact), then a perception of sense may equally be a dealing with universals. The theory has already broken down. Price really meant what he said, for he goes on to argue that "our *abstract* ideas seem most properly to belong to the understanding"; and his alleged "immediate perceptions" were all the while held to "give rise to new original ideas." In the

[1] *Id.* pp. 147–48.
[2] *Review*, ch. i, sec. 1, end. Rep. in Selby-Bigge's *British Moralists*, ii, 108.
[3] *Id.* sec. 3, p. 121.
[4] *Id.* sec. 2, p. 112.

third section the argument becomes quite incoherent, and, indeed, unintelligible.

Nor is any further progress made by the separate handling of the concepts of beauty and merit. The perception of beauty being emotional (as if that of right and wrong were not), "it must appear that in men it is *necessary* that the rational principle, or the intellectual discernment of right and wrong, should be *aided* by instinctive determinations. The dictates of mere reason, being slow and deliberate, would be otherwise much too weak."[1] So that "the truth seems to be that, in contemplating the actions of moral agents, we have both a perception of the understanding and a feeling of the *heart*." And both immediate, be it observed; the act of the understanding was at first expressly so described; the "slow and deliberate" procedure of reason being an afterthought to make an opening for 'feeling.' Meantime, no pretence has been made of showing wherein a feeling of the deformity of a wrong action differs from the instant intellectual perception of its wrongness: though it is afterwards conceded that the ideas of good and ill desert "are plainly a species of the ideas of right and wrong,"[2] characterizing the action as distinct from the agent.

Now, as the notions of merit and demerit are in their first formation as obviously and often as violently emotional as any that can be put under the head of feelings of moral beauty and deformity, there is no escape from the conclusion that Price's first stand for the immediate perceptions of the understanding was made before his analysis, and that he has held to it without justification. A candid revision would have committed him to making his 'immediate perception' emotional as regards the class of actions he was considering—gratitude, treachery, etc. He would then have proceeded to realize that, if we are to make such distinctions, the work of the reason or the understanding (which for him are the same) is precisely *not* the immediate perception (which is *given to* it) but the reconsideration of the intuitive or inculcated judgment. And this result he would not face. On a theological impulse, he had assumed that the à priori must be the right, and, with Balguy,[3] that it must be

[1] *Id.* ch. ii, p. 137.
[2] *Id.* ch. iv, par. i, p. 147.
[3] From Balguy he had taken his starting-point that "for the perception of [moral rectitude].....the faculty of understanding is altogether sufficient without the intervention of our author's [*i.e.* Hutcheson's] Moral Sense." *The Foundations of Moral Goodness*, ed. 1728, p. 24. Balguy repeatedly argues that virtue is "dishonoured by so ignoble an original as that of instinct," and that "the same observation may be applied to the notion of a moral sense." *Id.* p. 27. Despite these expressions, Balguy is rather better entitled to praise for courtesy in controversy than Brown, to whom it is accorded by Dr. Albee (*History of English Utilitarianism*, p. 83). Extracts from his *Foundation* are given by Selby-Bigge, vol. ii.

something higher than 'instinct.' Thereafter his argument is an inconsistent polemic round his presupposition.

The whole issue might be concisely argued and settled on Price's positions. Had he and Balguy paid due attention to the natural history of morals, they would have seen that the judgments which they ascribe to the understanding are often organic; that many—as, the rightness of revenge, instinctively felt, and those of inculcated religion, as, human sacrifice—will not bear the scrutiny of the developed understanding, which condemns them as either destructive of social well-being or iniquitous, as disregarding the principle of reciprocity. They would then be forced to face the test of utility, which might have recommended itself to them as beginning à priori, yet as an 'instinct,' and as being still in its nature a judgment calling for perpetual reconsideration by 'reason,' which is thus put in its desired position of ultimate supremacy. But Price, propounding his ethic before he had seen round the problem, committed himself to the simple primary proposition that "We have an immediate approbation of making the virtuous happy, and discouraging the vicious, abstracted from all consequences."[1] That is perfectly true. But his reason, had he pursued the inquiry, would have shown him that the immediate judgment ought not to remain abstracted from all consequences. Immediate approbation can be and is given to mere martial success, and is therein non-moral, though just as spontaneous as the approval given to the act which can be rationally proved meritorious; and disapprobation may in the same fashion be spontaneously bestowed on an action which on rational inquiry turns out to be virtuous. Price's argument is ethically incomplete; for he assumed he was solving the problem when he merely showed how some judgments were reached.

Balguy, a cleric of more considerate judgment than Brown, also remained fixed in a logical contradiction. Persistently arguing that no action can be meritorious to which the agent is "determined by the force of a mere instinct,"[2] he finally opposed the 'greatest happiness' principle on the score that it could prescribe injustice. The author of an anonymous discourse on "Wisdom the first spring of action in the Deity" had put the case that "a great number might be made happy by placing a single being, as soon as he existed, in a state of misery," and had replied that this could not be justified. "Why not?" asks Balguy. "If happiness be the chief and ultimate

[1] *Review*, ch. iv, p. 148 of rep. cited.
[2] *Foundation of Moral Goodness*, pt. ii, answer to Art. xxiii (ed. 1734, in *Collection of Tracts*, by John Balguy, p. 169).

end of action, everything must give way to it, and a lesser quantity be always resigned for the sake of a greater.....if moral good be inferior and subordinate to natural."[1] That is a valid statement of the counter-test, the solution being that the true test is dual, and that it is the work of the moral reason to apply the two in concert. But the clerical moralists could not make the compromise, and it was left to more catholic and more teachable spirits to progress towards a larger view.

Price, indeed, figures finally as the precursor of Kant. "Liberty and Reason," he declares, "constitute the capacity of virtue.....It is the actual conformity of the *wills* of moral agents to what they see or believe to be the fitnesses of things, that is the object of our praise and esteem."[2] "Instinctive benevolence is no principle of virtue, nor are any actions merely flowing from it virtuous."[3] "Resisting our strongest instincts, and following steadily, in contradiction to them, the determinations of cool unbiased reason," is "the very highest virtue."[4] Here we return to the old theological position that there can be no virtue without self-denial, which reappears also in the Kantian doctrine that a good volition is one in which we *unwillingly* obey the dictate of the moral reason. And it is after all this that Price pronounces that "Reasonable and calm *self-love*, as well as the *love* of mankind, is entirely a virtuous principle."[5] Self-contradiction could no further go. Good men can do these things, but their doctrine can hardly be a help to goodness.

§ 4. *Smith.* (*Sympathy.*)

Adam Smith (1723–1790) had made a wide reputation as a moral philosopher by his THEORY OF MORAL SENTIMENTS (1759) before he produced his WEALTH OF NATIONS (1776). That interesting discursiveness which in the latter classic, by reason of the concreteness of the subject-matter, is a permanent attraction, seems to have constituted the charm of the former also in its day, hard as it is for the modern reader to detect it under what is for him a trying prolixity. All admirers have admitted that the THEORY stands much in need of condensation; but the remedy proves disastrous to its claims. Smith, to whom Dugald Stewart ascribed a "singular consistency" in his philosophical principles,[6] fails to sustain that panegyric even in the WEALTH OF NATIONS; and in the THEORY he is still further from earning it.

[1] *Supplement* to *Collection of Tracts* cited, pp. 421–22. [2] *Review*, ch. viii, p. 179.
[3] *Id.* p. 183. [4] *Id.* p. 184. [5] *Id. ib.*
[6] *Account of Smith's Life and Writings*, prefixed to the *Theory*, Bohn ed. p. lxviii.

The idea that Sympathy is the basis or origin of moral codes is in some degree present in most of the systems which had followed Hobbes; and by Hume it had in effect been put as the 'sentiment' which the perception of utility served or was guided by, while Hutcheson introduced it as disinterested Benevolence, seeking the common good with no thought of self-interest, or even of pleasure in feeling benevolent. Smith, recognizing the test of utility, sought to frame a system which placed the basis of morals in something less transcendental than disinterested and unrejoicing Benevolence, and something psychologically prior to the criterion of utility. But at the very outset his psychology is confused by his attempt to account for moral approbation. He gives it two spheres—(1) that of 'propriety,' which largely quadrates with the self-regarding virtues; and (2) that of the consequences of actions. 'Sympathy' is declared to be the measure or motive of approbation in both cases, our degree of participation in a man's feeling being the measure of our approval of his indulgence in a passion (as grief, joy, love, or hate); while "In the beneficial or hurtful nature of the *effects* which the affection *aims at* or *tends* to produce consists the merit or demerit of the action, the qualities by which it is entitled to reward or is deserving of punishment."[1] That is to say, we criticize the man in respect of the propriety with which he governs his passions; while we criticize his actions in terms of their tendency (by implication, as regards the general good).

Here, apparently, we are credited with a primary or spontaneous sense of propriety in other men's displays of feeling (a propriety measured by our dislike of other people's loud display of emotion), which by implication is analogous to an equally spontaneous sense of rightness or wrongness in their transitive actions. Yet Smith's main or ultimate purpose, apparently, is to argue that we do not or cannot *begin* with a verdict in terms of our mere feeling. He does not explicitly deny Gay's position; he never mentions either of Gay's treatises; he merely puts his own doctrine in a series of statements which it is hardly possible to co-ordinate. It is often stated for him with a false simplicity, and criticized accordingly, 'sympathy' being taken as a quite clear concept and posited as the essence of Smith's explanation of moral sentiments. What he really does is to put a series of disparate propositions:—

1. The *whole virtue or vice* of an action *ultimately* depends on the "sentiment or affection of the heart" from which it proceeds.[2]

[1] *Theory*, pt. i, sec. i, ch. 3. Bohn ed. p. 17. Italics ours.
[2] Pt. i, sec. i, ch. 3. (Bohn ed. p. 17.)

2. Its *propriety* consists in the proportion (or fitness) "which the affection seems to bear to the cause or the object which excites it."

3. Its *merit or demerit* (*i.e.* its title to reward or punishment) consists in the effects which it aims at or tends to produce.

Again:—

4. That action which most appears to deserve gratitude is that which most deserves reward. *Vice versa* with what most excites resentment.

5. These are respectively actions of a beneficial and a hurtful tendency.[1]

But yet again:—

6. Whatever *praise or blame* can be due to any action must belong *either* (1) to the "intention or affection of the heart" of the doer, *or* (2) to the physical action ("external action or movement of the body"), *or* (3) to the consequences which *actually result.* "These three different things constitute the whole nature and circumstances of the action, and must be the foundation of whatever quality can belong to it." But the two latter circumstances *cannot* be the grounds of any praise or blame. Therefore the "*intention* or affection of the heart" of the agent is the sole ground for praising or blaming an action.[2] Immediately, however, it is avowed that the actual consequences of an action *do* "have a very great effect upon our sentiments concerning its merit or demerit." That is to say, we hardly ever judge of actions as we ought to do.[3]

Thus far we have noted a statement of the grounds upon which we praise or blame (as virtuous or vicious, *or* meritorious or the reverse) the actions of others. Then comes the statement of the grounds upon which we approve or disapprove of our own; and at this point there is interposed a summary statement of our grounds for praising or blaming other men's actions, the combined propositions running thus:—

When we praise or blame any one's conduct it is after asking ourselves whether we "can or cannot entirely sympathize with the sentiments and motives which directed it";[4] and that when we approve or disapprove of our own conduct it is after we have mentally put ourselves in another man's situation and "viewed it, as it were, with his eyes and from his station." Sympathy, then, appears first as a permitting or approving of actions when we sympathize with the motives or the results, or both; while *sympathy in antipathy* similarly vetoes or disapproves of actions which we

[1] Pt. ii, sec. i, ch. i, p. 94.
[2] Pt. ii, sec. iii, p. 133.
[3] *Id.* p. 134.
[4] Pt. iii, ch. i, par. 2.

agree in not liking or in actively disliking. But when it comes to our own actions it is far from clear whether our censure or approval arises from knowing or believing that other people would approve or disapprove of our motives, or from knowing that they like or dislike our actions. And in either case such response to other people's sentiments is not what the word 'sympathy' naturally suggests. It suggests rather the doing of good actions because we have a fellow feeling for others.

At the very outset, indeed, Smith gives a hint, though an obscure one, that he does not use 'sympathy' in the ordinary sense. The meaning of the word, he says, was *perhaps* originally [it certainly *was*] the same as that of fellow-feeling or compassion for the sorrow of others; but it "may now, however, without much impropriety, be made use of to denote our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever."[1] And as he goes on it is clear that the term must also signify fellow-feeling in any judgment or opinion, whether moral or æsthetic.

Soon it becomes clear that for Smith sympathy in the old sense is a very intermittent factor. We do not sympathize with violent displays of either joy or grief, love or hate; so that 'propriety' consists in not expecting much in those connections. The line of advance of Smith's theory seems to be that in *this* way we begin to regard our own actions from our neighbours' point of view. Where we disapprove of them we expect them to disapprove of us. "The all-wise Author of Nature has in this manner taught man to respect the sentiments and judgments of his brethren; to be more or less pleased when they approve of his conduct, and to be more or less hurt when they disapprove of it."[2] Thus it begins to appear that the scientific content of 'sympathy' in Smith's theory is not at all mutual benevolence, but only (1) the necessary regard of each for the views of others in a community where all react on each other, and (2) the amount of *agreement* which is thus come to. On what *grounds*, then, do we come to an agreement? Is morality, after all, simply the law of the land, whatever it may be? And is not the law of the land simply the concordat of the competing egoisms?

Smith, we know, always protested against the identification of his doctrine with the so-called 'selfish theory' in any of its forms. But he chronically describes humanity as distinctly selfish, even though its spontaneous approbations often exclude any thought of self-interest. It 'sympathizes' with success rather than with

[1] Pt. i, sec. i, ch. i, p. 5.

[2] Pt iii, ch. ii. Bohn ed. p. 185.

sorrow. "How hearty," he observes, "are the acclamations of the mob, who never bear any envy to their superiors, at a triumph or a public entry. And how sedate and moderate is commonly their grief at an execution.....Whenever we cordially congratulate our friends, which, *however, to the disgrace of human nature, we do but seldom*, their joy literally becomes our joy; we are, *for the moment*, as happy as they are.....But, *on the contrary*, when we condole with our friends in their afflictions, how little do we feel in comparison of what they feel!"[1] "It is on account of this dull sensibility to the afflictions of others that magnanimity amidst great distress appears always so divinely graceful. His behaviour is genteel [Fr. *gentil*] and agreeable who can maintain his cheerfulness amidst a number of frivolous disasters. But he appears to be more than mortal who can support, in the same manner, the most dreadful calamities."[2] It is for *those* personalities that we "are more apt to weep and shed tears," as did the friends of Socrates when he drank the hemlock.[3] "On the contrary, he always appears in some measure mean and despicable who is sunk in sorrow and dejection upon account of any calamity of his own."[4] It would thus appear that it is *admiration* for self-control that so far determines our praise of others; that we set up for ourselves the standard which we admire in them; and that for the sorrows of others, as such, we have in general but little sympathy.

As to this, Smith is repeatedly explicit. "Let us suppose," he writes, "that the great empire of China, with all its myriads of inhabitants, was suddenly swallowed up by an earthquake"; how would the "man of humanity" in Europe comport himself? He would first "express strongly his sorrow for the misfortune of that unhappy people; he would make many melancholy reflections..... He would, too, perhaps, if he was a man of speculation, enter into many reasonings concerning the effects which this disaster might produce upon the commerce of Europe.....And when all this fine philosophy was over.....he would pursue his business or his pleasure.....as if no such accident had happened. The most frivolous disaster which could befall himself would occasion a more real disturbance."[5] Of course he would not be willing to sacrifice all China to prevent a "paltry misfortune to himself": such a villain never existed. But now comes the dilemma of the theory:—

"What makes this difference? When our passive feelings

[1] Pt. i, sec. iii, ch. i, p. 65. He had previously said (sec. ii, ch. 5) that "our sympathy with deep distress is *very* strong and *very* sincere."
[2] *Id.* p. 66. [3] *Id.* p. 67. [4] *Id.* p. 68. [5] Pt. iii, ch. iii, pp. 192-93.

> are *almost always so sordid and so selfish*, how comes it that our active principles should often be so generous and so noble? .....What is it which prompts the generous upon all occasions, and the mean upon many, to sacrifice their own interests to the greater interests of others? *It is not the soft power of humanity, it is not that feeble spark of benevolence which Nature has lighted up in the human heart*, that is thus capable of counteracting the strongest impulses of self-love. It is a *stronger power*..... It is *reason, principle, conscience*, the inhabitant of the breast, the man within, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct. It is he who, whenever we are about to *act* so as to affect the happiness of others, calls to us.....that we are but one of the multitude, and that when we prefer ourselves so shamefully and so blindly[1] to others, we become the proper objects of resentment, abhorrence, and execration.....It is he who shows us the *propriety* of generosity and the *deformity* of injustice; the propriety of resigning the greatest interests of our own for the yet greater interests of others; and the deformity of doing the smallest injury to another in order to obtain the greatest benefit to ourselves. *It is not the love of our neighbour, it is not the love of mankind*, which upon *many* occasions prompts us to the practice of those divine virtues. It is a *stronger love*, a more powerful affection, which generally takes place upon such occasions; *the love of what is honourable and noble, of the grandeur and dignity and superiority of our own characters.*"[2]

Again, then, we reach the conclusion that we frame our standard of goodness by (*a*) what we have learned to admire as noble conduct in others, and (*b*) by our recognition that selfish conduct incurs general execration. And this process of reflection is "reason, conscience." Smith's 'sympathy' is, in fact, the Stoic and Ciceronian innate 'virtue,' with the imposed explanation that we come by our sense of virtue as a result of our spontaneous admiration of self-devotion and our experience of the spontaneous disgust of other people at egoism. If it be asked, 'What then, on this view, is the explanation of the moral standards of an aggressive tribe, who admire prowess and enslave those whom they conquer?' the answer would seem to be that their 'sympathy' is restricted to their own tribe. Thus far the theory would hold good. When it is further asked, 'How comes it that *within* the tribe the aggressiveness of the masterful upon others is repressed or condemned by public opinion?' the answer of Smith seems to be that people in general dislike being robbed either of wife or property, and express themselves accordingly. But here, surely, we come to a basis of simple self-interest, imposing

[1] There is no prior illustration of the "so" save the apologue on China!
[2] *Id.* pp. 193-94. Italics ours.

an equal restraint on all; and 'sympathy' definitely becomes the Hobbesian acquiescence in a law which safeguards the many against the few.

At times Smith appears to be alleging a spontaneous admiration for unselfishness as the starting-point in the process, as when, after remarking that we spontaneously admire him who puts a noble restraint upon his just resentment, he writes: "And *hence* it is that to feel much for others and little for ourselves.....*constitutes* the perfection of human nature." This sudden leap beyond the inference is followed by the quite arbitrary double dictum that "As to love our neighbours as we love ourselves is the great law of Christianity, *so* it is the great *precept of nature* to love ourselves only as we love our neighbour, *or, what comes to the same thing, as our neighbour is capable of loving us.*"[1] It would be difficult to reduce sympathy more plainly to a self-regarding foundation, after a parade of à priori altruism. And yet in the next paragraph we get this:—

> "The amiable virtue of humanity requires, surely, a sensibility much beyond what is possessed by the rude vulgar of mankind. The great and exalted virtue of magnanimity undoubtedly demands much more than that degree of self-command which the *weakest*[2] of mortals is capable of exerting. As in the common degree of the intellectual qualities there are no abilities, so in the common degree of the moral there is no virtue."

Again it would seem as if in Smith's idea goodness was a revelation to the mass of mankind which won their admiration, and that *thus* arose the moral code. Yet elsewhere he emphatically and repeatedly notes how ready are the multitude to admire and extol the mere qualities of power and success, apart from all morality.

The fact is that, though Smith gives to his 'system' the air of being contrary to the so-called 'selfish theory' mainly by the use of the word 'sympathy,' which carries the general connotation of altruism while really containing for his argument only the idea of *consent*,[3] he is constantly explaining human action in terms of *antipathy*, to which, in his argument, sympathy is secondary and ancillary. And antipathy, obviously, is founded in self-regard. Had he been content to admit that self-regard *must* enter into moral 'sentiment' (to say nothing of Butler's doctrine of 'reasonable self-love' as in harmony with public interest), and to argue further that the very nature of society involves a balancing process of

[1] Pt. i, sec. i, ch. 5.
[2] This word would seem to be a slip of the pen. The argument calls for 'average.'
[3] This is recognized by his excellent expositor, Mr. J. A. Farrer. *Adam Smith*, 1881, p. 196 *sq.*

fellow-feeling, he would have advanced ethical science considerably more than he actually has done. Once more, there is an egoism of theory, of system-making, as well as of social action.

When, finally, we come to the problem of the theory and practice of human sacrifice, under which "it is meet that one man die for the people," 'sympathy' becomes the mere agreement of the majority to seek *their* collective good, regarded as that of the tribe, at the cost of the victim. This datum certainly does not destroy the theory: it simply delimits the conception of sympathy as the basis of morals to that of the *social origin of morality*, which, for science a truism, is the reduction of the other concept of the Providential Plan to that of the Order of Nature. Smith, in effect, like so many other writers of his age, Hume included, establishes the latter conception while imposing the theistic theory as an embellishment. It is, however, largely on the side of his formal theism that Smith gives to his system as a whole a flavour of optimism which is not at all borne out by his diagnosis of the 'sympathy' to which he ascribes the origin of morality. Again and again he shows how contracted, how conventional, how often merely customary, is the ethic of sympathy which he is formulating. It is, he declares, affected by local custom and training about as much as is the standard of beauty;[1] and it is delimited and perverted by caste and class feeling.[2] Here, then, sympathy is admittedly *de*moralizing as well as moralizing. The theory is indeed loyal to fact in detail; but the details of contrary aspect are never brought together; and when the just conclusion of an exposition would be that, even as the standard of beauty is widened and corrected by widened knowledge of æsthetic phenomena, so the moral standard is widened by intercourse among peoples, we get instead a declamation about the necessity or efficacy of theism to give us the notion of divine fatherhood and human brotherhood,[3] when the very data before us negate the pretence that either exists as a fact, or that theism can operate as alleged. No less arbitrary, however, is Smith's reasoning in regard to the 'purposes' which he sees fit to assign to 'Nature,' a species of paralogism which he did much to bring into new vogue. Nature and the "All-Wise Being" do duty indifferently in his argument, the teleological method being always the same. "Resentment," he tells us, "seems to have been given us by nature for defence, and for defence only."[4] Every nugatory proposition about Nature that had been made current by ancient

[1] Pt. v, ch. ii.
[2] *Id.* and pt. vi, sec. ii, ch. 2, p. 338.
[3] Pt. vi, sec. ii, ch. 3.
[4] Pt. ii, sec. ii, ch. 1, p. 113.

Stoics and modern theists is in this fashion revived by our moralist. The plain conclusion to which such propositions tend, in his hands as in those of Clarke or Shaftesbury, is that it can matter nothing what Nature 'intends,' since men will do both that and the opposite. If a man whose life or property is wantonly assailed should slay the assailant, he has disobeyed Nature. Nature, on the other hand, has no device for preventing such disobedience, unless human laws be such. But if they are, equally from Nature is the homicide which is punished. When he is identifying Nature and the All-Wise Being, Smith is capable of propositions which challenge the question why he attempts any analysis of men's motives at all. By his account, all the tendencies of men in turn figure as implanted in them by Nature for a purpose. To such a teleological conception the whole argument about the sources of moral approbation is irrelevant. That Nature makes us approve for a useful purpose is the presiding proposition which cancels them all,[1] while utterly failing to explain the presence of evil and frustration. Smith's notion of Nature is in effect a contingent dualism, in which Nature can be called-in to sanction anything that seems laudable. It is thus that in his economics he reaches the egregious position that Nature assists man in agriculture but not in manufactures.

> The trouble with Smith is that he suffers from the defect (so incident to book-makers) of intellectual myopia. He sees one facet of a problem at a time, concentrates on that, and then passes on to another, never reaching a comprehensive view of the whole. This defect is frequently apparent even in the WEALTH OF NATIONS, where he so often departs from his ground principle, and so often uses against a course from which he is averse arguments that can be turned directly against his own advocacy of other courses.[2] That this was constitutional with him we can further gather from Dugald Stewart's account[3] of how, among his intimate friends, he would propound judgments on books and theories which were "liable to be influenced by accidental circumstances and by the humour of the moment," and would give strangers a false idea of his general cast of thought. So, too, he would delineate characters with which he was intimate, and then "The picture was always lively and expressive, and commonly bore a strong and amusing resemblance to the original when viewed under one particular aspect, but seldom, perhaps, conveyed a just and complete

[1] Mr. J. A. Farrer has very justly remarked (p. 136) concerning Smith's Nature-worship that "It seems as if the shadow of Mandeville had rested over his pen, and that he often wrote rather as the advocate of a system of nature which he believed to have been falsely impugned than as merely the analyst of our moral sentiments."

[2] Cp. the author's *Economics of Progress*, 1917, pp. 200–206.

[3] *Account*, as cited, near end.

conception of it in all its dimensions and proportions." And all this consists with his constitutional absent-mindedness, the co-efficient of the intellectual myopia. It was, of course, the 'defect of a quality,' and the shortcoming of a good and intellectually honest man.

The habit of contemplating phenomena under different psychic aspects may explain the hiatus between Smith's ethics and his economics. If Smith's ethical theory is to be tested by his later handling of the problems of political economy in the WEALTH OF NATIONS (1776), he must be admitted to have regarded the 'general deed of man' solely under the aspect of the reactions of self-interest, and to have relied almost solely on the test of utility as a means of appeal for reform. Buckle has represented him as writing the two books by way of independent deductive application of the two contrasted principles of sympathy and selfishness. It is true that Smith's method is rather deductive than inductive, and that in each book he ostensibly rides one principle; but, as has been shown above, the 'sympathy' of the THEORY is not what is commonly understood by that term, but a particular application of it.

On the other hand, it is true that in the economic treatise 'sympathy' is not merely not introduced, but is not understood in any save the remote sense of common consent as to values. And while it must be granted that appeals to moral feeling are no part of the business of the economist as such, it is rather remarkable that one who had so dwelt on the phenomena of sympathy should never even comment on the absence of it from the commercial side of things, or at least try to explain how supposed collective self-interest overrides all recognition of the claims of other communities much more completely than it normally does in the dealings of individuals, even of different nations, with each other. An incidental appeal to sympathy here would not have been impolitic.

Thus Smith's system explains some things by sympathy in a special and technical sense of that term, and fails to present it in the ordinary sense, where that might fairly be done as a factor in the *purification* of the current nationalized and racialized moral codes. The summing-up of it is that it brings out in much detail, though hardly in a comprehensive view, the necessary social conditioning of all morality, alike as to its best and its worst points. But Smith's theory only incidentally reaches a recognition of all the factors in the formation. In his friendly criticism of Hutcheson[1] in the division "Of Systems of Moral Philosophy," he shows that the 'moral sense' of that thinker is resolvable into four kinds of

[1] Pt. vii, sec. iii, ch. 3.

sentiment which are separately exhibited in the THEORY. First, we sympathize with the agent; secondly, we sympathize with the beneficiary; thirdly, we observe that the agent follows "the general rules by which those two sympathies generally act"; and lastly, when we consider actions as tending to individual or general good, "they appear to derive a beauty from this utility." This, he contends, is all that the alleged moral sense *can* contain; therefore it is a supernumerary term. But that being so, Smith's own implicit use of 'sympathy' to cover approval first of the agent and then of the beneficiary (both references to self), then recognition of useful purpose, and finally recognition of useful result, is in exactly the same case. The general term confessedly sets up a notion which turns out to be illusory, and an independent analysis supersedes it. A resort to the thesis of Gay would greatly simplify the problem.

Some value attaches to Smith's examination of the doctrine that neither gratitude nor resentment, sympathy nor affection, should guide conduct, but solely the sense of duty—always identified with obedience to the will of the deity. He shows, albeit inadequately, how that identification can turn morality into the negation of goodness, and how difficult it is to frame a law of duty either for the deportmental virtues (with which he so much concerns himself) or for gratitude, justice being in his opinion the only virtue in regard to which the law of duty is precise. On the other hand, a wrong sense of duty, or "what is called an erroneous conscience," sets up a very grave dilemma. "False notions of religion are almost the only causes which can occasion any very gross perversion of our natural sentiments in this way; and that principle which gives the greatest authority to the rules of duty *is alone capable of distorting them in any considerable degree*"[1]—an unconscious cancelment of the aspersion upon Mandeville as an encourager of vice.[2] Here Smith is faced by a fundamental anomaly in his own system of optimistic deism, and he either does not at all realize the fact or is concerned to suppress the problem alike for Christians and deists.

Taking as a datum the plot of Voltaire's MAHOMET, in which a Moslem youth and a maiden, personally attached to an old man who loves them both, and, unknown to them, is their father, he notes how the religious precept moves them to murder their friend upon fraudulent command. Smith greatly admires the tragedy; but all he has to say on the moral is that we ought to feel compas-

[1] Pt. iii, ch. vi, p. 251. [2] Pt. vii, sec. ii, ch. 4.

sion "for every person who is in this manner misled by religion, when we are sure that it is really religion that misleads him and not the pretence of it." He was probably thinking of Butler, with his facile formula of 'self-deceit' for the case of people whose religion moved them to another course than his own in politics. It was Smith's obvious business to ask how the belief in religious duty which effected the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, joyfully wrought by a Catholic multitude, could be allowed to form part of a rational system of morals at all. The compassion he prescribed in the case of the murderous fanatic would hold good for the Thug; and here Butler's precept of compassion for iniquity is to be considered. But all this is outside of Smith's doctrine of social sympathy, and he ignores the difficulty. His position as an optimistic deist would be that 'natural' religion gave no such precept of massacre as was found by its votaries in the 'revealed' religion. But then the 'revealed' religion was on the deist view, *pro tanto*, an emanation of evil arising out of the 'natural' belief. The plain conclusion, for ethics, would be that a regard to social utility *without* reference to the supposed 'will' of a deity which was only a hypostasis of the believer's own will was incomparably the better basis for morals. Utility as a guide to moral judgment Smith repeatedly recognizes. But in the matter of religion he rested immovably in a 'sentiment' which, even on Hume's urging, he refused to analyse.[1] It was for him the ostensible keystone of an optimism which he shrank from challenging.

The upshot was that alike as to his optimism and the concept of 'justice' in regard to which he declared the sense of duty to be precise and 'accurate,' Smith's system remained incomplete and inconsistent. In one of those moods of concentration which yielded him conclusions irreconcilable with the 'system' in which he formally included them, he writes:—

> "The disposition to admire, and almost to worship, the rich and the powerful, and to despise, or at least to neglect, persons of poor and mean condition, though *necessary both to establish and to maintain* the distinction of ranks and the order of society, is at the same time *the great and most universal cause of the corruption of our moral sentiments*. That wealth and greatness are often regarded with the respect and admiration which are due only to wisdom and virtue, and that the contempt of which vice and folly are the only proper objects

[1] He would not publish, after Hume's death, the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* which Hume left to his care for publication. But for the loyalty of Hume's nephew they would never have appeared.

> is often most unjustly bestowed upon poverty and weakness, has been the complaint of moralists in all ages.....They are the wise and the virtuous chiefly, a select, though, I am afraid, but a small party, who are the real and steady admirers of wisdom and virtue. The great mob of mankind are the admirers and worshippers, and, what may seem more extraordinary, the *disinterested* admirers and worshippers, of wealth and greatness."

This pronouncement, which is wrought out with the same curious detachment, composes oddly enough with a theory of the derivation of the moral code partly from admiration of moral nobility and partly from some form of 'sympathy' with suffering. Decidedly the fabling bee, Mandeville, had left his sting in the optimist. The total result is bizarre. Whereas the professed pessimist puts a quasi-optimistic formula in which private vices work public good, the optimist puts one in which the temper necessary to conserve society is the great source of moral corruption. And it would be hard to show that the second is not the more pessimistic of the two—if there be any fundamental difference.

§ 5. *Tucker.* (*Christian Determinism.*)

In the age of seven-volume novels Abraham Tucker (1705–1774), a scholarly landowner, set himself to produce a philosophical treatise on that scale, which he entitled THE LIGHT OF NATURE PURSUED (7 vols. 1768–78), publishing four volumes under the pseudonym of Edward Search, and leaving three to be issued posthumously. He writes with a deliberate and whimsical prolixity, as of a Sterne turned moral and philosophical, but still determined to pen everything that may occur to him.[1] The proverbial man on a desert island, limited to one book, might do worse than choose the first volume of Tucker in the two-volume reprint; but under no other circumstances is he now likely to be closely perused. He is still quite readable for any one who has nothing else in the world to do; but in the field of ethics he asks too much room for his personality. After he had lost his eyesight he invented a device which enabled him to go on writing; and he must have gone on writing to the end. But in the second half of his work there is a great falling off. Blending pietistic mysticism with the 'light of nature,' he becomes alternately splenetic and fantastic, his sagacity

[1] "When called on, as a boy, to pay a periodical compliment to some distant relations he was invariably referred by his guardian to St. Paul's Epistles as the most complete model of epistolary correspondence" (*Life*, pref. to ed. 1842, p. vi).

and his geniality alike failing him. Blindness had affected his spirit.

This intellectual egotist, always genial when not gospelling, was certainly concerned to think and to guide his fellows to do so. He began his philosophic output with "Chapter XXIV," dealing with "Freewill, Foreknowledge, and Fate" (1763),[1] and in this "Fragment" he lengthily expounds determinism upon Christian lines, clearly if discursively showing that the 'free agency' so much contended for is "no more than the dependency of actions upon volition."[2] It is significant of the continuous pressure of naturalism in the thought of the age that this humorous Christian, who is so fixed in his inherited faith that its phraseology mixes with everything he has to say, has thoroughly accepted the two master doctrines of contemporary rationalism—the test of utility in morals and the causedness of all volition. He is indeed on this side constitutionally rationalistic. Had he been born in Turkey or China he would have been as orthodox a Moslem or Confucian as he was a Christian in England, but he would always have been a reasoner and a humorous philosopher. And, though he can hardly be said to have added anything of weight to the rational conception of morals, he is essentially scientific in his recognition of the ethico-biological equivalence of the satisfactions which all men seek. Theologian as he is, he is loyal to his determinism to the point of denying that men can have any desert in the eyes of deity; and his inference is that it is each man's duty to add all he can to the general stock of happiness which a just deity must equally divide! Tucker's notions of extra-human and extra-mundane existence, indeed, detach him here from Christian theology altogether. There is perhaps no more striking illustration of the essential irrelevance of all theology to rational ethics than his fashion of turning it to the account of the principles which he holds by a rational tenure. But the practice has certainly affected his consistency.

For Tucker, while talking of 'moral senses,' will not admit that our most spontaneous moral judgments are à priori (which is what he means by 'natural') any more than language is: they are "either catched by sympathy from others or formed by translation"[3] (= association); and he actually points to the variety of moral bias as proving that men have no 'natural' bias. This is destructive as

[1] A criticism on this work in the *Monthly Review* elicited from him a pamphlet, *Man in Quest of Himself*, in the name of the "Cuthbert Comment" who plays commentator in the first book. Rep. in Parr's *Metaphysical Tracts*, 1837.

[2] *Freewill*, pp. 46–47.

[3] *Id.* p. 140, *note*. Many of Tucker's ideas are put in annotations whimsically ascribed to a cousin of Search, "Cuthbert Comment."

against Hutcheson's 'moral sense,' the argument being that if the moral judgment were a faculty like vision it would show all men the same aspects. But Tucker really outgoes Hutcheson's fallacy on another side, in that he at this point assumes all men to have equal potentialities of proclivity, while teaching that deity implants in them different 'talents.' Tucker is perhaps as logical as any optimistic theist has ever been, and his inconsistencies are the more significant of the hopelessness of that case.

As it was, his constant professions of Scripturalism and theism enabled him to get a hearing for rational and humane doctrines which, put on the determinist basis without those professions, would have brought upon the teaching the charge of Spinozism or atheism. And his influence in his age was extensive. Paley, who often follows Gay without any acknowledgment, makes full preliminary acknowledgment of his debt to Tucker; and it is Tucker's utilitarianism that he expounds, with the stricter flavour of orthodoxy and the more businesslike method required for his academic purpose.

§ 6. *Paley.* (*Christian Utilitarianism.*)

It was a delay in publication on the part of Bentham that gave Paley his opportunity to put forward a systematic Utilitarianism on a formally Christian basis. Bentham's INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS AND LEGISLATION had been actually printed in 1780, but was not published till 1789. In 1785 appeared Paley's PRINCIPLES OF MORAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY. And so expressly are both books devoted to the task of framing a working code rather than a fresh philosophical analysis that Paley may be supposed to have known of the existence of Bentham's treatise. In any case, it was to the advantage of his generation that he should come first. The whole trend of moral science for two generations had been to a definite utilitarianism.[1] The performance of Hobbes had given rise to a wide debate on the Why of morals. After a time this had merged into a discussion of the How—the manner in which moral distinctions and principles came to be set up. Latterly the temper of the civilized world was more and more setting to a discussion of the What—the actual right line of action not merely for individuals towards each other, but for States and Governments as legislators. The American Revolution, initiating a new age of democracy, had been achieved: the French Revolution was close at hand.

[1] "From the time of Locke the morality of consequences appeared to prevail over the morality of à priori principles." Whewell, *Lectures*, p. 108.

The discursive charm of Tucker had made the way easier for any utilitarian treatise; and Paley, who with all his propagandist skill hardly captivates the feelings, gained greatly by his predecessor's influence. For his own part, he gives his readers little philosophic trouble. With the address of the born popularizer, he quickly tells them that moral philosophy is needed to guard them against mistakes in the matter or the application of the three rules of life—the law of honour, the law of the land, and the Scriptures; the first being substantially scandalous, the second insufficient for life in general, and the third not being framed to give "a specific direction for every moral doubt." Then he brusquely tests the doctrine of the moral sense by asking whether a story of very vile parricide would, if it were related to him, shock as it shocks us—"the wild boy caught some years ago in the woods of Hanover," or a savage similarly cut off from all society. The fact that such a story *could not* be related to a languageless savage does not seem to have occurred to the moralist; and his assumption that all the à priori schools would expect the savage to be shocked is equally high-handed. It suffices him to take up (without citing him) the position of Gay,[1] that we ascribe good and bad qualities to actions as we have found them good and bad to ourselves; whereupon it follows that primary or instinctive codes need rectification, and we come straight to the criterion of the general happiness. Pleasure, he points out for any who may not have learned the lesson, is best to be found indirectly, in the search for satisfactions desirable as such but not conceived simply as pleasures. Thus we arrive at a calculated happiness as the aim of life and the ground of action.

The average conditions of real happiness are enumerated as (1) exercise of the social affections, (2) free exercise of our faculties, (3) good habits, (4) health; in regard to which it is claimed that they are pretty equally distributed, and that "vice has no advantage over virtue, *even* with respect to this world's happiness."[2] And then, at a leap, we get the famous definition:[3] "Virtue is '*the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of eternal happiness.*'" The datum of the will of God is reached in the usual way by inferring that Omnipotence *must* be benevolent, and

[1] Dr. Albee, in a passage (*Hist. of Util.* p. 160) of which the syntax has apparently miscarried, seems to charge disingenuousness upon Paley for not openly citing a work he evidently used, and his acquaintance with which could not possibly be denied. There is no need to put the matter in this way. Paley, in his Memoir of Bishop Law (rep. in Meadley's *Life of Paley*, 2nd ed. App. p. 356), expressly refers to Gay's Dissertation as "a very valuable piece." And seeing that Paley puts in quotation marks a passage (*Principles*, bk. i, ch. v) which sums up Gay's position, he is not reasonably to be charged with disingenuous conduct in the matter.

[2] *Principles*, bk. i, ch. vi, end.

[3] Ch. vii, beginning.

therefore must be supposed to wish the happiness of mankind. But the 'future happiness' motive appears to be explained only by the assertion that "A man who is earnest in his endeavours after the happiness of a future state has in this respect an advantage over all the world," since the pursuit "lasts him to his life's end"[1]—a proposition in which there seems to be no good ground for suspecting intentional irony. Such is the simple basis of the Paleyan ethical system soon adopted at Cambridge as a valid summary of the moral doctrines there previously current, but never, it would seem, accepted at Oxford, though generally assimilated in England for a generation or two.

It is a curious circumstance that the publicist who passed as the most successful defender of the Christian faith in his age should in other respects have won his vogue by a moral teaching to which the Christian system had no relevance save as supplying the general motive of post-mortem rewards and punishments and the customary 'obligation' thereto annexed. Paley has got far enough from Wollaston to claim that life is in the main sufficiently happy, though he shuns Gay's simple demonstration that the prospect of earthly happiness is obligation enough to the course which will give it. When he has settled down to his task of ascertaining utilities, the definition[2] that "right signifies consistency with the will of God" is seen to be but a way of saying with Gay that what makes for human happiness must be the will of God, and is the mere equivalent of the earlier: "So, then, actions are to be estimated by their tendency. Whatever is expedient is right. It is the utility of any moral rule alone which constitutes the obligation of it."[3]

Of course, Paley anticipates all the objections as to the pernicious results of leaving people to make utility their guide in conduct, pointing out that the common or social utility precludes egoistic application, and meeting the plea of the impossibility of calculating all human utilities by avowing that we are limited to rules of general tendency. It now begins to be clear that those who pressed the *non possumus* plea against him were, in fact, much more conscious of unwillingness to accept the proposed criterion in view of the new vistas of possible application. When men like Gisborne and Robert Hall declaimed against making "the MERE physical good of society"[4] the chief moral test, they were not thinking only of an abstract materialism as against transcendentalism in morals: they were mindful of the actual demands now being made that the world

[1] *Id.* ed. 1824, p. 21.
[2] Bk. ii, ch. ix.
[3] Bk. ii, ch. vi, beginning.
[4] Cited by Whewell, *Lectures*, pp. 200, 202.

should be put on a better footing. All the while they stultified their own general objection by pleading as against utilitarianism precisely that such a method was contrary to utility. Like all other men, they were of necessity utilitarian in nine-tenths of their lives. As Whewell confessed later in regard to "the principle of greatest resulting good" in morals: "No one questions its truth; every investigation has more and more firmly established its reality. But then, how hard to fix its precise meaning."[1] Most true; but that does not excuse the Gisbornes for arguing as if it could possibly be put aside in the interest of any à priori formula whatever. A Leveller who should in those days have professed either a Biblical or a Cudworthian mandate to make land common property would have had short shrift from the anti-Paleyans.

It must always be remembered, as regards the strictures passed upon Paley in his own day and since, that he was for his time a Liberal, friendly to liberal political ideas; and that the contrary animus has never slept. It is difficult not to feel, however, that, if Paley had had something of the finer perceptiveness of Tucker, he would have put the doctrine of expediency with a more searching analysis of the natural objections. When the ordinary serious man or woman hears such a proposition, whether the word used be utility or expediency, there occurs a recoil and a challenge: "Am I to calculate whether it will pay me to speak the truth? Is it for me a question of utility whether I shall love my children or fulfil my promises? Is gratitude a preference for the useful?" And to such a challenge the answer might usefully be put thus:—

"You have selected, as it happens, those established moral judgments which are least capable of being called in question on utilitarian grounds. If you are conscious of an invariable and irresistible impulse to speak the truth, so much the better, though you may do well to consider whether you are sure to do this when you pass judgment on doctrines or doctrinaires that are obnoxious to you. Probably even you, however, will admit that to tell a child it has a bad mother, or to reveal to a national enemy anything that will assist him in his enmity, is illicit.

"That you should love your children is safe common ground; but you will perhaps see on reflection that it is the principle of utility that restrains or should restrain you from spoiling them. And we shall all think the better of you if you not only pay your debts duly, but, say, at the sight of a burning house, rush in to help

[1] *Id.* p. 187.

a screaming victim without staying carefully to calculate the risks. Really, we are not trying to undermine your moral instincts. We are seeking your assent to the test of utility as the criterion in a multitude of cases in which (*a*) your instincts either give you no guidance or are apt to guide you wrong, or in which (*b*) your instincts and those of other respectable people are at strife.

"Do you, perchance, believe in persecution for what is declared to be wrong opinion in religion? If you do, you are nevertheless aware that many good men think it abominable and 'unchristian.' How, then, do you satisfy yourself that it is right in the way in which you feel that it is right to speak the truth and keep your promises? If you are prepared to slay or otherwise persecute those who differ from you in religious belief, do you think you make a very good moral impression when you tell us that your conscience absolves you? If it is right to override other men's consciences, why is it wrong to break a promise? If, on the other hand (as is to be hoped), you dislike and oppose persecution, does it never occur to you (as it did to Burleigh) to use the argument that it is inexpedient to persecute, seeing that persecution stiffens resistance and so multiplies evil and hatred? And is not the argument from expediency the strongest you can use at the present moment against the penal laws in Ireland?

"Consider, again, how you are placed on the question of the abolition of slavery. You agree with us [Paley helped in the anti-slavery agitation] that slavery is unjust; and you are met by some quite moral people with the argument that to free the slaves would do more harm than good. Do you meet them by saying that that *does not matter?* Do you not rather try to show that they have miscalculated the utilities? And, again, when there is a question of widening the franchise and re-grouping the constituencies, do you really think the matter can be settled without taking the test of utility into account?

"It is most true that all such calculations are difficult. When your friends tell us that Sabbath observance is finally right because it is useful, *they* are falling back on the test of expediency. But do you think they have taken much honest pains to calculate the expediencies? And when the lawyers say it is not only lawful and just but expedient to hang men for sheep-stealing, and execute a child for passing a false coin, how do you expect to settle the question? Can you ever reform a cruel law without convincing men that it is inexpedient? And can you not see that, in a world in which new appeals to right and justice and public advantage are

being made from year to year, it is the utility test that must finally decide?

"In a word, do you not see that whereas men began by feeling that certain things were right and others wrong, and making laws accordingly, there is a perpetual and inevitable process of readjustment, sometimes slow, sometimes rapid? Do you think, then, that men somehow get new *feelings* about right and wrong without any process of reasoning? It is true that the *feeling* of justice makes new developments when men are taught to see that at certain points they have forgotten their own professed principles of equity. It is true further that the acquired and developed sense of equity is always a potential check upon plans which ignore equity. But when you think out that very test of equity you will find that an element of expediency underlies it, and that in any case when men dispute as to equity social expediency is the only arbiter."

Thus and otherwise might the principle of utility have been put in a better light than is sometimes shed on it by Paley, some of whose arguments on the subject even verge on the grotesque. But he did in his own way an active service to his age in *applying* ethics to problems that the apriorists had simply ignored, and would have gone on ignoring, their inner light being too often for such purposes darkness. On the side of ethical theory, too, he nearly always leans to the humane. At the age of twenty-two he produced an essay in competition for a college prize, in which he stoutly defended Epicurus and his doctrine, both as against Stoicism and against the normal misrepresentation of Epicureanism.[1] It was a youthfully audacious performance, calling the Stoics "those Pharisees in philosophy." Rationalists have never shown such malice against the Apologist as has been shown by some of his own creed; but if any should be moved by his obsolete EVIDENCES to bear him ill-will as a special pleader, the recollection of his youthful defence of Epicurus should count with them in modification of judgment. It is defence enough for him, however, that he relied on argument when most Churchmen were still content with vituperation.

§ 7. *Cross Currents.*

Our histories, even those specially addressed to the progress of ideas, usually give very little notion of the total intellectual activity of an age. Hence the currency of the myth that the first half of the eighteenth century was a period of mental inaction. The nearer

[1] Meadley, *Life of Paley*, 2nd ed. App. A, p. 280 *sq.*

half of the century is less lost to view in culture history; but that too was more variously stirred than the surveys usually represent. In Scotland in particular there was a continuous philosophic activity from Hutcheson's outset to the stage of general reaction against the French Revolution, and even into that stage. On the side of ethics there was naturally resistance to the utilitarianism of Hume; and this resistance is oddly associated with the so-called philosophy of Common Sense, otherwise dubbed the "Scottish" Philosophy, because it was somewhat influentially expounded by Reid, Beattie, and Dugald Stewart.

> There is, of course, no more a Scottish philosophy than there is an English, an Irish, a French, or a German. The leading Scottish names in philosophical history are Hume and Smith, both alien to the 'Scottish' philosophy so-called; and Thomas Brown, who is at times put under the heading, reacted strongly against Reid. The use of the term 'common sense' has been sometimes charged against Reid and Beattie as a plagiarism from Buffier. It can really be traced to Shaftesbury; and the honour of origination is not a thing to be disputed over; since the term, if used otherwise than as a verbal convenience where philosophic analysis is not thought worth while, is either a 'begging of the question' or a refusal to argue philosophically at all. The very resort to it as a philosophic principle has latterly sufficed to secure the dismissal of the Reid-Beattie-Stewart school from serious attention or discussion.

The movement begins as an angry resistance to Hume's philosophic skepticism, and only after Hume's death turned to the ethical problems handled by him and Smith. Beattie[1] made his great sensation in 1770 by his 'Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth,' which won the admiration alike of Robert Burns and of the English bishops, the former acclaiming him as the poet who "tore the sceptic's bays," and the latter offering him a rich living if he would take orders in the Church of England. He claimed to prove "the universality and immutability of moral sentiment." As Priestley observed, Beattie followed the "spirit and manner" of Reid, which is exceedingly decisive, and insolent to those who think differently from himself; and Beattie "even exceeds Dr. Reid in throwing an odium on those whose sentiments he is willing to decry, by ascribing to them dangerous and frightful consequences."[2] Beattie's polemic is now entirely negligible, as is his 'Elements of Social Science' (2 vols. 4to. 1790–93); and it is not much otherwise

[1] James Beattie (1735–1803), parish schoolmaster, afterwards Professor of Logic and Moral Philosophy at Aberdeen.

[2] *Examination of Reid, Beattie, and Oswald*, 1775, p. 115.

with the later and more sober ethical argumentation of Reid,[1] who only in 1788 followed up his 'Inquiry into the Human Mind; on the Principles of Common Sense' (1764) and his 'Essays on the Intellectual Powers' (1785) with 'Essays on the Active Powers of the Mind,' in which he discussed ethical problems, always with reference to Hume. His criticism of the needless ambiguity set up in Hume's system by the proposition that 'justice' is an 'artificial' and not a natural virtue is largely valid; but he contributes nothing of his own to ethics, and wastes much time in comments on "what the Supreme Being has seen fit" to decree. As to utility, he repeats the standing claim that we recognize merit and demerit irrespective of that test, but makes no attempt to reduce to clearness the relations between the more durable and the more alterable moral judgments.

A broader and more scientific view of morals was taken by Ferguson,[2] whose outlook on life, given by his experience as an army chaplain, a travelling tutor, and a diplomatist in America, and critically set forth in his 'Essay on the History of Civil Society' (1767) and his 'History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic' (1783), was much the wider and more considerate. As early as 1766 he published an 'Analysis of Pneumatics[3] and Moral Philosophy for the use of Students in the College of Edinburgh'; and only in 1792, in old age and partial decrepitude, did he publish his PRINCIPLES OF MORAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE, described as a 'retrospect' of the lectures he had delivered on the basis of the earlier work. Avowedly he had learned from Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Montesquieu, and Harris; and his point of view is distinctly evolutionary. Not unjustly, he claims to adapt and reconcile alike Hobbes and Hume, Hutcheson and Smith, the reconciling principle being that morality is a progression towards perfection; and the attainment of perfection is posited as at once the end and the criterion of moral conduct. Here Ferguson takes up, with a catholic recognition of many sides of ethical truth, the position latterly favoured, as a seeming refuge from the empire of utilitarianism, by the English school which grew up round T. H. Green. The fact is nevertheless ignored by that school, who never mention him; though Cousin had acclaimed him as the outstanding moralist of the 'Scottish school,' declaring that "the

[1] Thomas Reid, Professor of Moral Philosophy, first at Aberdeen, later at Glasgow University. Priestley's criticism of his earlier work, and of Beattie, evidently moved Reid to cultivate amenity.

[2] Adam Ferguson (1724-1816), Professor, first, of Physics, and later of Moral Philosophy, at Edinburgh University.

[3] An old term then in use in Scotland for the lore of 'the soul.'

principle of perfection is a new principle at once more rational and more comprehensive than benevolence and sympathy, and one which, in our opinion, places Ferguson as a moralist above all his predecessors."[1] In his early books Ferguson had fully anticipated the modern verbal criticism of the position that 'pleasure' is the end sought by all, dwelling on the eagerness with which many turn from pleasure so-called to toil and danger. 'Perfection' was his term to cover all forms of quest; and though that term in turn fails to describe fitly the pursuits either of wealth or power, sport or art, it at least so clearly points to the general conception of self-realization that it might have sufficed to forestall much modern dispute if Ferguson had been attended to.

A similar conclusion is led up to in the massive work of the equally evolutionary and more systematic Scottish thinker, James Hutton (1726–1797), the geologist, whose INVESTIGATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF KNOWLEDGE AND OF THE PROGRESS OF REASON FROM SENSE TO SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY[2] wound up the main philosophic output of Scotland in his age. Like Ferguson, though with a much more frequent recourse to the "Author of Nature," Hutton assumes a development of man from a savage state,[3] and sees in morals a continuous progression of rational judgment. Ferguson disposed of the free-will problem briefly and conventionally; Hutton, with more philosophic pains, recognizing that will is effect as well as cause, though he ends by coinciding with Kant and Beattie in pronouncing that freedom of will consists in following a moral principle.[4] For him, virtue begins "the moment that a man, in reasoning from reflection, is made to think, that is to know scientifically, that he loves his neighbour."[5] Here, quaintly enough, morality is dissociated from religion; and for Hutton, as for Ferguson, ethics is on one side a science and on the other an art.

The vital problem, for that day as for ours, was the development of the art. But the Revolution and the reaction against it made impossible any extensive acceptance of that task. Ferguson, anti-despotic in his Essay on Civil Society, was so disconcerted by

[1] *Philosophie Écossaise*, 3e édit. 1857, p. 512. In the earlier *Cours d'histoire de la philos. morale au 18e Siècle* (édit. Bruxelles, 2 tom. 1841), prepared from the notes of pupils, Ferguson is discussed at much greater length, and with a good deal of hostile criticism, which disappears in the *Philosophie Écossaise*. The numbering of the lectures is also different.

[2] 3 vols. 4to, 1794. The sheer bulk of Hutton's work seems to have buried it. McCosh (*The Scottish Philosophy*, 1875, pp. 261–62) recoiled from its study.

[3] Ferguson, in his early *Essay*, had fallaciously opposed Hobbes with the thesis that primeval man must have evolved long in peace before he took to war; but he still supposes a rude state.

[4] Work cited, iii, 222-41.

[5] *Id.* p 309.

the Revolution that in his PRINCIPLES he declares despotism to be the necessary form of government for a corrupt society. Reid was of course no less reactionary; and Hutton, publishing in 1794, discreetly evaded all political application of his principles. It was left to another school to carry on the teaching that doctrines of social benevolence must be translated into courses of action if they are to count for anything in life.

Chapter VIII

RATIONALIST UTILITARIANISM

§ 1. *French Rationalism.*

We have seen utilitarianism definitely posited by Hume after being implicitly accepted and even argued for under other formulas by men ostensibly opposed to the movement of thought set up by Hobbes (who may be reckoned the modern initiator) as well as by men ostensibly of that school. The idea is nearly as definite in Butler, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson as in Mandeville, though all alike employ other formulas. In John Clarke of Hull, in Gay, and in Brown it is explicit, though always with a reference to the future state as the determining consideration; and it is this theological form that stamps the doctrine of Paley, who, following on Tucker, is able to secure for it a marked popularity among the orthodox. Only on that line, indeed, could it have been made popular in Britain in that age. Hume's rational utilitarianism would have had but a narrow audience if it had not been at times formally theistic; and even that could not secure it such a public as Paley's.

In France the evolution was different. The pandemonium of the wars of religion had left a society in which, while 'politic' Catholic orthodoxy served to bridle the savage fanaticism of the massacrists, rationalism, nourished by Montaigne and Charron, could hardly dream of a radical restatement of the problem of conduct. What was left of intellectual religious energy served only to carry on, as between Jansenists and Jesuits, another war of dogma on the theological crux of free-will; the Jansenists maintaining the doctrine of St. Augustine with verbal compromises, while the Jesuits doggedly maintained that Jansen had misinterpreted the Father on predestination. French philosophy proper, beginning with Descartes, turns to the problems of existence and knowledge rather than to ethics. Throughout the seventeenth century the theological ethic remains nominally in power, its official exponents showing no sign of either shame for the religious past or disquietude for the future save by way of fear lest unbelief should multiply. Never, down to the Revolution, does French Catholicism show any misgiving about the fundamental rightness of the ethic which had

drenched France in blood for forty years, and had thought to find salvation in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Pascal has no more heart-searchings on that score than Bossuet. The spirit of all-round humanity came in only with lukewarmness in religion, and ripened only with critical unbelief.

How philosophic Catholicism tended to react against rationalism in ethics may partly be gathered from the TRAITÉ DES PREMIÈRES VÉRITÉZ[1] of the Jesuit Father Buffier (1718), though Buffier is rather more of a Cartesian than of a Catholic. He declares positively for free-will while avowing that "there is in us a *penchant*, which also we call will, which is necessary in us, and which necessarily makes us desire in general to be happy."[2] Thus he reaches the customary counter-sense of declaring that the will is free *not* to follow a motive—as if any such choice did not mean the following of *another* motive; and even in avowing that the understanding informs the will he alleges that this is not a supplying of a motive to the will, which "makes its own motives" in virtue of its liberty.[3] Nevertheless he holds to the scholastic doctrine that "the will cannot incline to evil as such," since the will always seeks the good of the willer, and every accepted motive is thus, for it, good.[4] So, when he comes to criticize Locke, he meets the question, "Where is the truth of practice which is *universally* received without any difficulty?" with the answer, "Here is one, I think: 'Do nothing which *would* be blameable in the eyes of the *majority* of men *in all times and in all countries*.'"[5] The apparent confidence of the proposition cannot disguise the extreme uncertainty about à priori ethic which dictates the peculiarly guarded language, reducing the proposition to sheer nullity. All that is clear is that the philosophic Jesuit is hopelessly confused in his argumentation for free-will, and obscurely conscious of a great difficulty in respect of the immense variation of moral ideas.

Definiteness comes in with the rationalism of the next generation. Helvétius in his DE L'ESPRIT (1758) declares at once that all action is determined by self-interest well or ill understood, and that *the* test of rightness in conduct is utility. It is probable that, as Lange suggests,[6] the whole utilitarian movement in the French ethics of the second half of the eighteenth century derives largely

[1] A spelling reform movement was on foot at the period.
[2] *Traité*, ed. 1724, § 433. Cp. the sequel.
[3] *Id.* §§ 436, 437.
[4] *Id.* § 442.
[5] *Id. Remarque sur la métaphisique de M. Locke*, art. ii. (Ed. 1724, vol. ii, p. 258. This passage, which is cited by Bouillier in the introd. to his ed. of Buffier, 1841, is strangely omitted by him from the text.
[6] *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i, 326.

from the much-maligned materialist La Mettrie, though, as Lange admits, such a movement is the natural outcome of all that had gone before. Locke had made particularly clear the rational basis and purport of determinism for all who followed him; and the French rationalists are to a man Lockians. Montesquieu's DE L'ESPRIT DES LOIS (1748) is thoroughly utilitarian in sentiment and in method; and Montesquieu owes nothing to La Mettrie. But the HISTOIRE NATURELLE DE L'AME (1746) and L'HOMME MACHINE (1748) of La Mettrie gave a still stronger footing to the principle of the causation of the will, and Helvétius puts it with perfect precision. The doctrine of free-will, philosophically considered, means for him "that there can be volitions without motives, and consequently effects without causes."[1] That there is freedom to act on choice is a matter of course; the question is, On what principle are we to choose?[2] La Mettrie, as materialist, had pleaded against cruel punishments; and Helvétius, who was benevolence incarnate, applies to all ethics a tranquilly fearless criticism, impeaching without passion, and treating vicious bias as pitiable, not hateful. In some respects he is the most truly scientific writer on ethics in his century, and his dispassionateness has not yet been improved upon. Among his propositions are these:—

> "The unjust contempt of particular societies for each other, like the contempt of one individual for another, is solely the effect of ignorance and of pride;[3] pride without doubt censurable, but necessary [*i.e.* a product of causation], and inherent in human nature. Pride is the germ of so many virtues and talents that we must not hope to destroy or even seek to enfeeble it, but simply to direct it to right things [*choses honnêtes*]. If I mock the pride of certain men I doubtless do so only by force of another pride, perhaps better understood than theirs in this particular case, as being more conformable to the general interest, for the justice of our judgments and our actions is never anything but the happy concurrence of our interest with the public interest.
>
> [*Footnote.*] "Interest presents objects to us only under the aspects under which it is useful to us to perceive them. When one judges conformably to the public interest, it is not so much to the justness of one's mind or character that credit is to be given as to the chance which places us in the circumstances

[1] *De l'Esprit*, Disc. i, ch. 4.

[2] Voltaire protested against Helvétius's proposition that 'free' is only a synonym for 'enlightened,' claiming that Locke had shown the contrary in his chapter on Power. But Helvétius at bottom agreed with Locke. He either meant by *éclairé* 'guided'—that is, determined by information—or wanted to convey that a will not really enlightened is not even in the popular sense free to choose.

[3] This point is taken up later by Ferguson and Hutton.

where we have an interest to see with the public. He who examines himself deeply will too often find himself wrong in not being modest. He will then not plume himself on his lights; he will ignore his superiority. Insight [*l'esprit*] is like health; when one has it one does not notice it."[1]

"If the Church and the kings permit the slave trade in negroes; if the Christian, who curses in God's name those who bring trouble and dissension into families, blesses the merchant who sails the Gold Coast or Senegal to exchange against negroes the goods which the Africans want; if by this commerce the Europeans maintain without remorse perpetual wars between those peoples, it is because, apart from particular treaties and the generally recognized usages which we call the Law of Nations, the Church and the kings hold that the peoples are to each other precisely in the position of the first men before societies were formed.....and that there consequently cannot be in that case any robbery or injustice. As regards even particular treaties.....these, having never been guaranteed by a sufficient number of nations.....have almost never been maintained save by force..... [When we inquire why] a people which breaks treaty with another is less culpable than the individual who violates the conventions made with society, and why, in public opinion, unjust conquests dishonour a nation less than robberies do an individual, [it soon becomes clear that] 'there is always a great probability that' a nation will profit by breaking its treaty."

The conclusion calmly drawn on these lines is that, though the aggrandizement of a nation is shown by history to be the almost certain presage of its decadence, "the infraction of treaties and that species of brigandage between the nations will probably [*doit*], as is proved by the past, the promise of the future, subsist until all the peoples, or at least the majority of them, have made general conventions, and the nations, according to the project of Henri IV or of the Abbé Saint-Pierre, have reciprocally guaranteed each other's possessions, and engaged to arm against any people which seeks to subject another."[2] Here we have the clearest possible forecast of the League of Nations; the problem had been fully considered, and the prediction has thus far been fulfilled.

For men who saw the facts of history thus clearly, the application of the test of utility was a matter of course, and a moral need before which all other solutions were reduced to insignificance. The difficulty of finding the right utilitarian solution, even if they had fully realized it, would have been for them only a reason the more

[1] *De l'Esprit*, Disc. ii, ch. 7. Ed. 1759, vol. i, p. 89.
[2] *Id.* Disc. iii, ch. 4. Ed. cited, i, 281–83.

for making the effort. What was only too frightfully clear was that for lack of recognition of the criterion of human happiness in religious and lay practice alike preventible evil was wrought to an enormous extent. The answer of religion to Helvétius was to sentence his book to be burned; and to this day the religious spirit vilifies his doctrine. In that age it was the revelation of the spirit of humanity; and the whole movement of intellectual liberation was utilitarian in its ethic. Ere long Jansenism was to persecute as savagely as Jesuitism had ever done; the innocent Calas was to be broken on the wheel on a charge of monstrous falsity; and the moralists of religion were to go on maintaining that the body of forty judges who at length, through the unresting and irresistible energy of Voltaire, reconsidered the case and quashed the conviction, gave a false decision. Voltaire, who maintained the utilitarian principle *à outrance*,[1] while as spontaneously moved as ever man was by the passion for justice, was a living force for sanity and humanity in human affairs. The ethic which in France, as in England, denounced determinism as 'fatalism' remained bound up with persecution, tyranny, and cruelty till the crash of the Revolution.

The work of M. J. P. Picot on the influence of religion in France in the seventeenth century[2] is a very interesting illustration of the hiatus in the Catholic mind as to the very matter affirmed. Picot sets forth in detail the achievements in church-building, convent-founding, hospital-building, charity schools, etc., achieved in the century in question, protesting against those histories which exhibit merely the strifes, quarrels, and hatreds of sects and orders. He prefers to dwell on missionary enterprise, and goes so far as to admit that Protestant missions, being also motived by religion, are to be recorded and praised.[3] When, however, he proceeds to a preliminary sketch of the religious wars of the sixteenth century, he is concerned chiefly to show that they were set up by the Protestants, who began the fighting and were equally guilty with the Catholics of persecution and savagery. It never occurs to him that the acts of both sides are still more clearly to be ascribed to the spirit of religion than are the acts of charity which he signalizes in the seventeenth century.

Picot, nevertheless, is opposed to persecution, and writes of St. Bartholomew's Day as "cette déplorable journée, triste représaille du massacre d'Orthès, et de tant d'autres cruautés."[4]

[1] *Traité de la Métaphysique*, ch. ix. This treatise was only posthumously published.
[2] *Essai historique sur l'influence de la religion en France pendant la dix-septième siècle, ou Tableau des établissements religieux formés à cette époque*, etc. 2 tom. 1824.
[3] Work cited, préf. p. xiv.
[4] Work cited, Introd. p. 29.

Supposing the absurdly false explanation of the Massacre were true, the fact would remain that the whole catena of bloodshed was the outcome of religious motives. On Picot's principles the religious ethic yielded the diverse products of slaughter and charity. Which, then, was the more likely to be curtailed by the resort to the principle of utility as a guide to conduct? It was hardly likely to be charity, though both church-building and convent-building would doubtless suffer. Helvétius, certainly, was as zealous for charity as he was opposed to the blighting of women's lives in nunneries.

What occurred in pre-revolutionary France, as regarded ethical thought, was a rapid widening of the whole conception of morals. In England, the entire discussion had proceeded as if on the assumption that the sphere of duty was already well delimited, and that what had to be debated was mainly the groundwork of moral sentiment, and the securing of a more faithful fulfilment of generally recognized duties. In France, Rousseau forensically but forcibly attacked the whole implied theory of existing society, impeaching its arrangements, its assumptions, its effects on human life. Where Rousseau had impeached organized society, Helvétius analysed the theory and practice of States down to the moral structure of the individual, showing the hiatus between the collective action of communities and the moral principles individually professed. Thenceforward there is a continuous process of new 'criticism of life' in Europe up to the unlimited humanitarianism of Shelley.

The work of Helvétius had a great vogue, and was translated into several languages, English included. In France it gave a decisive lead to the rationalistic party, though Voltaire, who never came to a clear decision on the free-will question,[1] criticized it as a treatise on matter rather than on mind. Helvétius was practically optimistic to the extent of arguing that, if only the desire for instruction could be stimulated sufficiently, all intelligences would be found equally capable of that attention which, he decides, is the determining factor in mental power;[2] though he finally admits that, if the desire for instruction is not equally educible, mental power is in that sense a special gift of nature.[3] Upon such optimism the temper which produced the Revolution partly proceeded; and the

[1] The reasoning in his chapter (vi) on the subject in his *Métaphysique* is such as to suggest that if he had clearly realized the exact issue he would have been a determinist. As it is, he emphatically declares that man's 'liberty' is a very feeble and limited one. He means that only in certain cases do men's impulses leave them to a quite rational choice of conduct—that is, to a wise selection between motives.

[2] This assumption of some kind of abstract equality of faculty in human beings, a notion entirely unsupported by the analogies of animal life, recurs from time to time in rationalist thought, and was one of the errors of J. S. Mill.

[3] Disc. iii, ch. 4, end.

ethical teaching of Helvétius was followed up Baron d'Holbach in his SYSTÈME DE LA NATURE, prudentially ascribed to the deceased Mirabaud (1770). It is after explicitly formulating his doctrine that the mind is an aspect of the body that d'Holbach sums up for utility as the obvious guide in public and private morals :—

> "Let us then renounce the vain project of destroying the passions in men's hearts; let us direct them towards objects useful to themselves and their associates. Let education, government, and the laws habituate them [*i.e.* men] and restrain them [*i.e.* their passions] within the just limits fixed by experience and reason. Let the ambitious have honours, etc.....when he usefully serves his country; let riches be given to him who desires them when he makes himself useful to his fellow citizens;.....in a word, let the human passions have a free course when there result from them real and durable advantages to society."[1]

There is here revealed, before the Revolution, a conception of society as in process of continuous evolution, and capable of indefinite reconstruction. This had been held by English and other thinkers in a mainly negative way, as an inference from the facts of history, rather than as a dynamic principle. Hume, though opposing in his last years the notion of applying compulsion to the American colonies, was equally averse from any ideal of reconstruction for his own country; and Paley was of course no less so. In France, the situation of conflict between criticism on one hand and the State on the other forced the principle of change effectively to the front; and Condorcet, penning just before his death his ESQUISSE D'UN TABLEAU HISTORIQUE DES PROGRÈS DE L'ESPRIT HUMAIN, posthumously published (1795), boldly forecasts a social evolution in which the fundamental problem of population was faced with a vision that outwent his time.

D'Holbach, by comparison, is content to put an intuitive ethic as his justification. Like all his school, he teaches positively that virtue is its own reward, which no power can take away, and that without virtue there is no happiness.[2] And the last survivor of the old Voltairean group, Saint Lambert, who lived to the age of eighty-nine, published at the age of eighty-two his CATÉCHISME UNIVERSEL (1798), otherwise PRINCIPES DES MOEURS CHEZ TOUTES LES NATIONS, wherein the utilitarian test and the idealistic precept are combined as in Helvétius and the rest. As the ruling philosophy of the revolutionary age—that is, for the small minority

[1] *Système de la Nature*, Ptie. I, ch. 9. Ed. 1771, vol. i, p. 159.

[2] *Id.* ch. 15.

who attended to philosophy—was that of Condillac, a strict development of Locke's derivation of thought from sensation, so the ethic of the age was utilitarian, without resort to the theological attractions and deterrents of a future state. It remained, however, in the main theistic; there being hardly any theoretic atheism among the revolutionary leaders, who, like the Revolution as a whole, owed much more impulsion to the eloquent political idealism of Rousseau than to that of the ill-written SYSTEM OF NATURE. And the current ethic as a whole ran much more to abstract benevolence and the affirmation of self-conscious virtue than to the enumeration of the utilitarian tests. It is Saint Lambert who lays down the precept: "Serve the man in him of whom you cannot love the person."

> It is not impossible that this was an echo from Kant, whose doctrine was by 1798 well known in Germany; but it belongs naturally to the spirit of the pre-revolution period. Cousin, whose lecture on Saint Lambert is in large part a model of perverse criticism, admits this to be a *belle parole*.[1] And, with all its imperfection as a theoretic treatise, the work of Saint Lambert certainly compares favourably with the professional criticism passed upon it by the Cousin school in the next age.

What the champions of intuitionist or independent ethics have strangely failed to see is that the revolutionary ethic, while impugning the current practice by utilitarian tests, is as intuitionist at bottom as theirs. Rousseau was indeed much more of an intuitionist than many English clergymen. The American and French Revolutions, in short, proclaimed afresh what had been proclaimed by the English Rebellion, that all men find divine right on their side in their quarrel, whichever side it be. Butler had angrily cut the knot by pronouncing the Cromwellians self-deceived sinners; and his successors found proportionally violent labels for the regicides of France: what they did not account for was that men now felt an 'eternal and immutable morality' to underlie their claims to freedom and self-government. For the revolutionists, liberty, equality, and fraternity were names to conjure with even as justice and duty had been. Conscience was on their side, as it had been on Cromwell's; and the 'Rights of Man' were at once felt by millions to be 'sanctioned' by 'the voice of God within.' Thus was intuitionist ethic at a death-grapple with intuitionist ethic, each appealing to à priori conviction, whether termed natural or divine. The pretence to approve and act 'irrespective of consequences' was common to both sides. Republicanism denounced

[1] *Cours d'hist. de la philos. morale au 18e siècle*, ed. 1841, i, 187.

royalism for treading down happiness, which republicanism proposed to secure; but the *right to* happiness was held by every utilitarian as an intuition. Yet the sole critical response of the champions of orthodoxy was to affirm that the revolutionists were atheists, which was quite untrue, and, even had it been true, was wholly irrelevant. The fact that they had found à priori grounds for the faith that was in them was merely counted to them for unrighteousness; and intuitionism was *by* intuitionism branded as the negation of morality. In that logical chaos, it was left to utilitarianism to find a moral standing-ground for law and order.

§ 2. *Jeremy Bentham.*

Bentham (1748–1832) has told how in his youth, as by a sudden illumination, he saw in Hume's TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE[1] the true principle of moral science. "That the foundations of all virtue are laid in utility is there demonstrated, after a few exceptions made, with the strongest force of evidence; but I see not, any more than Helvétius saw, what need there was for the exceptions."[2] "No sooner had I read that part of the work which touches on this subject," he adds, "than I felt as if scales had fallen from my eyes. I then for the first time learnt to call the cause of the People the cause of virtue." As the reference to Helvétius shows, that author also had inspired Bentham's early thought; and in his old age he told Bowring that "Montesquieu, Barrington, Beccaria, and Helvétius—but most of all Helvétius"[3] (whom he had studied in his twenty-first year)—had led him to the principle of Utility or Greatest Happiness as the key to ethics.

As he further avowed, it was the reform and not the origin of morals that always concerned him; and here Helvétius and Beccaria might well stir him more than Hume did. But whereas Beccaria had regard mainly to the system of legal punishments, Bentham is concerned to reform the whole structure of legislation. Ethics, in short, emerges for him as the problem not merely of what is right conduct for the individual but what is right law for society to impose on its members—an issue not fully raised even by Hobbes, and certainly not hitherto closely contemplated. Bentham thus begins a new period in moral philosophy, unless we give some such credit to the conservative Paley. Both, in fact, come into a move-

[1] It is curious that Bentham should cite the *Treatise*, of the first two volumes of which he speaks very doubtfully, and not the later *Inquiry*, in which the principle of Utility is worked out much more fully than in the *Treatise*.
[2] *A Fragment on Government* (1776), ch. i, note to § 36.
[3] C. M. Atkinson, *Jeremy Bentham*, 1905, p. 36, cp. 78.

ment of *political* reconstruction that may be said to take its start practically from the American Revolution, which so clearly primed the French. Bentham, however, was prepared in his English environment, before even the American Revolution, to become the champion of social, legal, and political reform; and he seems not to have needed even the conception of the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" (which reached him from Beccaria through Priestley) to inspire him to frame a utilitarian system.

The opening of his PRINCIPLES OF MORALS AND LEGISLATION (printed in 1780, but only in 1789 published, after revision) irresistibly recalls the sentiment of the circus-master who exhorted his staff to 'cut the cackle and come to the 'osses'; though there is no great evidence of any patient study of previous moral philosophy on the young Bentham's part. Like Spencer in our own age, he was not a hard reader. The summary account of previous systems of moral philosophy which he puts in a long note to § 14 of his second chapter in the edition of 1823 is a rather impatient dismissal of all ethical reasoning which does not recognize that the test of utility is peremptory and final. Discussing the principle of 'sympathy' without naming Adam Smith, he treats it as if it were offered as a substitute for the utilitarian test in determining the rightness or wrongness of actions; whereas it was one of the solutions offered of the problem of the origin of the moral sentiments. The principle of the 'moral sense' he treats in the same fashion; while, on the other hand, he says nothing here either of the rational utilitarianism of Hume, his chief Master, or of the theological utilitarianism of Brown and Tucker. It did not, in fact, lie in his original scheme to do anything but develop systematically the utilitarian principle; and the note in question is but an incidental protest against all ethical writing that seems to ignore it.

Nothing could be more uncompromising than his claim that "The principle of utility neither requires nor admits of any other regulator than itself."[1] All arguments which repugn it, he points out, employ reasons drawn "from that very principle itself,"[2] since they seek to show that the resort to it is 'dangerous'—that is, opposed to utility.[3] Asceticism and theology he dismisses with equal decision. "The principle of theology refers everything to God's pleasure. But what is God's pleasure? God does not, he

[1] *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ch. ii, § 19, end.
[2] *Id.* ch. i, § 13.
[3] As justice is expressly founded on by way of checking the test of Utility as put without it, this is a partial begging of the question.

confessedly does not now, either speak or write to us. How, then, are we to know what is his pleasure? By observing what is our own pleasure and pronouncing it to be his."[1] The harm often resulting from religious motives is significantly stressed;[2] and no less pointed is the pronouncement that "the dictates of religion seem to approach nearer and nearer to a coincidence with those of utility.....But why? Because the dictates of the moral sanction do.....Men of the worst religion, influenced by the voice and practice of the surrounding world, borrow continually a new and a new leaf out of the book of utility."[3] But the future rewards and punishments which the theological utilitarians had professed to regard as indispensable are for the Rationalist of small significance. "As to such of the pleasures and pains belonging to the religious sanction as regard a future life, of what kind these may be we cannot know. They lie not open to our observation."[4] Bentham, in fact, regarded religious motives simply as facts of individual history, evidently feeling, with Laplace, that he had "no need of that hypothesis."

It is chiefly his devotion to the juristic side of ethics that lengthens Bentham's exposition: always practical, he was all his life scheming for reforms; and for him the science of right and wrong worked out in practice as a science of legislation, in which he was mainly interested with criminal law and criminal treatment. On the theoretic side he is as definite as possible. All men's actions are motived by the desire to escape pain[5] and secure pleasure; and he finds a measure or standard of utility for the individual in the notation of the intensity, duration, certainty, and nearness of each pleasure and pain; and for the group in these also, with the addition of tests of fruitfulness, purity [*i.e.* unmixedness], and extent.[6]

Not concerning himself with the origin or derivation of the moral sentiments, he takes for granted that men have them, and notes four 'sanctions' or deterrent pressures which control proclivity—to wit, the physical, the political, the moral (or popular), and the religious; in other words, the natural consequences of actions, the law, the force of public opinion, and the force of religious beliefs, hopes, and fears.[7] These, it will be observed, are simply the four sanctions of Gay, who founds on Locke. If Bentham had been equally precise on another much-debated point, he might perhaps have saved posterity a good deal of unprofitable discussion. The

[1] *Id.* ch. ii, note to § 18. [2] *Id.* ch. x, § 40.
[3] *Id. ib.* § 41. [4] *Id.* ch. iii, § 10.
[5] This was for him the answer to the argument that men voluntarily embrace toil and danger. Such action is escape from tedium. [6] *Id.* ch. iv. [7] Ch. iii, § 2.

debate always proceeds in a certain sequence. When utility is declared to be the test of rightness and wrongness, the religious or otherwise à priori moralist protests, as before noted, that he judges actions independently of their utility. Bentham thereupon asks whether the other ever approves of an act which he believes to be harmful, or condemns any which he believes to be useful; and thus at once he is inside the opponent's guard. The latter insists, however, that though rightness and wrongness must ultimately coincide with utility to the one and the many alike, it may not do so at the moment or even in this life; and the true test must therefore be either (*a*) the inner monitor = conscience = sense of justice, or (*b*) the delivered divine code. And here he challenges the utilitarian to say how the individual who prefers his own utility or interest to that of the community is to be induced to have due regard to the latter. Butler had in effect said that the two, properly understood, always coincided; and Bentham, like most of the rational utilitarians, implicitly assumes that this is so. But the apriorist, if he will, may urge that obviously many people subordinate the interests of the community to their own, finding more pleasure in (say) profiteering than pain over public censure. What, then, has the utilitarian to say for himself?

The proper answer would be (1) the simple avowal that, as regards actions which the law does not seek to punish, the only control is and must always be the simple pressure of public opinion; and (2) the simultaneous challenge to the supernaturalist to confess that this control can hardly be less efficacious than that of his prediction of future rewards and punishments. What can be more obvious than the fact that in no age of any faith has either the hope or the fear of the future state prevented countless breaches of the code to which the prediction is attached? To say that the fear sometimes operates is nothing to the purpose, for fear of public shame and response to personal appeal unquestionably operate also, and this in a much larger proportion of cases. We are discussing the average or aggregate of conduct; and it is perfectly certain that an indefinite percentage of men in all ages have broken the moral law avowedly accepted by them, because their impulse to self-gratification was stronger than any sense of 'obligation' set up by theology. That, on the other hand, men who were not deterred even by predictions in which they professed to believe have been deterred by social (as apart from legal) pressures is equally certain. The residual fact is that no pressures, sanctions, or menaces of, 'obligation' can make altruists of thorough egoists. The egoist

accordingly, will always interpret the utilitarian test egoistically, exactly as he always did and does interpret any other rule—Christian, pagan, or pantheistic—by which he professes to live.

The essential truth as to 'obligation,' put, as we saw, by Gay, is never put so clearly by Bentham, who on such points runs to the juristic definition. The word 'ought,' he declared, *ought* to be abolished. Everything would have been fairly clear had he put the simple sequence :—

1. There can be no stronger 'obligation' than that of following your own happiness as you see it.

2. If a man is informed of a repugnant 'duty' to which he is called by legal compulsion or by pressure of social opinion, he is likely to do it, inasmuch as either form of pressure affects what Bentham called his 'sensibilities.'[1]

3. Insofar as the pressure is not compulsive, and he is insensitive to social opinion, he will be insensitive to any other 'obligation' to do that for which he has no inclination.

4. Insofar, however, as he is in the habit of expecting or exacting 'justice' from others and looking for reciprocity, he cannot, unless he is abnormally selfish, escape discomfort in knowing that he has practised injustice or failed in reciprocity. In that sense 'conscience' is operative in most men.

5. Where it is not operative morality has none save the legal hold; and that hold will be precarious. 'Where there is nothing, the king loses his rights.'

6. Complete absence of the sense of reciprocity is happily rare. There is proverbially 'honour among thieves.'

7. For most men the social relation is in a greater or less degree a generator, conservator, and educator of the sense of reciprocity. Ordinary intercourse evokes it even in egoistic types for the purposes of the intercourse.

8. Beyond the sphere of immediate personal intercourse its activity depends on (*a*) primary moral sensibility and (*b*) susceptibility to moral education or appeal. To a certain extent the actively good can influence those less spontaneously perceptive. This influence is partly emotional or sympathetic, the spectacle of active kindness being for most of us always attractive.

9. But the intelligent study of social utility, as it has been the great source of moral mass progress in mankind from the primitive state onwards, remains so in every higher stage. The perception of

[1] See ch. vi.

the dependence of personal well-being on social well-being, which is spontaneous for the best, is in some measure communicable to nearly all. And inasmuch as the study of social utility is always being forced on the majority by the self-regarding demands of others, the mutual pressures of egoism are educative where the appeal of the actively altruistic alone would be ineffective. The utilitarian view of ethics thus yields an irreducible foothold for optimism, or at least for meliorism, precisely where an à priori ethic tends to see only ground for pessimism. When all is said, it is the à priori moralists, from Plato to Butler and from Butler to Eucken, who have been practically most pessimistic.

10. On the field of international relations, it is to the utilitarian spirit that the hope of betterment must mainly look. Community of religious faith has never availed to promote cosmopolitanism. A common Christianity could avail only for crusades against Islam, and only occasionally for that. Protestant States could be mortal enemies to each other, as Catholics had been.[1] Only in a common concern for utility, as against the immeasurable evils of war, does there seem to be any solid ground of hope for a reign of peace. The ideal of blind 'duty to the State' has been as fully exploited for gross aggression as for resistance thereto.

11. And this last fact points to the irreducible basis of self-regard [which under the name of 'Hedonism' is founded on by the ethical thought that has evolved on utilitarian lines, but which is equally founded on by teachings that profess to combat Hedonism]. Whether men be ostensibly altruistic or ostensibly egoistic, they seek self-fulfilment, self-realization; and as international peace will be peace for communities seeking therein their own welfare, so the communities which seek social utility in a wider diffusion of well-being, in the creation of better opportunities for all, will be aggregates of men seeking their own happiness, some more altruistically, some less so. Men find self-fulfilment in an infinite variety of ways; and to demand that these shall all be shaped to an ideal of active altruism is to ask what cannot be. A society in which all seek the good of others before their own is unthinkable; for how can all *accept* the sacrifice of all others if their principle be self-sacrifice? The rational limit is that none shall curtail or infringe upon the equal rights of others. As Hegel put it, walls stand because everything tends to fall. Communities remain solidary

[1] And as in the World War Catholic group sympathies were in certain cases given to Germany, by reason of other enmities.

because each, in his own way, and under restraint of others' equal needs, seeks his own good.

All this is more or less clearly implicit in Bentham's manifold doctrine, which carries the practical task of ethics further than it had been carried by any previous writer. For that very reason, however, to say nothing of his personal inadequacies, he could not well 'see the wood for the trees'; and his manner and his method both counted for friction. Of his multifarious body of published work much appeared only after his death; and much of his manuscript has remained unpublished. His practical interests were so various that they thwarted each other, and unfinished books were put aside by him in order to pen other unfinished books. He suffered from the self-frustration of productivity as Coleridge did from that of indolence. No man in his day, perhaps, was better qualified to produce a complete body of ethical doctrine. His chapter "Of Circumstances influencing Sensibility," compared with Paley or any other predecessor, shows a range of early practical observation and criticism of life wider than that of Mill, who in one of his reactionary moods accused his master of being always too aloof from life—as indeed he tended to be in his later years. But his labours were never rightly co-ordinated; and his DEONTOLOGY (Science of the 'Ought,' from Gr. δέον, that which is fitting, duty) was redacted after his death by his executor, Sir John Bowring, as were others of his manuscripts by his friend Dumont. In Bowring's case the redaction of the DEONTOLOGY has always been held to make the work as much his as Bentham's.

But, with all this incompletion and non-fulfilment, Bentham's ethical teaching, theoretical and practical, was one of the greatest moral influences of his age. If we are to test doctrines by their fruits, the ethic of utility has nothing to fear. Within eight years of the publication of the DE L'ESPRIT of Helvétius the young Italian Beccaria, who declared that Helvétius had "forced me irresistibly into the way of truth, and aroused my attention for the first time to the blindness and misery of humanity,"[1] produced his treatise DEI DELITTI E DELLE PENE, "a book which has done more for law reform than any other before or since."[2] Beccaria was no more a trained lawyer than was Helvétius a trained philosopher. The latter in his youth was chargeable with Epicureanism in the vulgar sense; Beccaria was a pessimist by constitution. But a rational ethical principle put them at one; and Beccaria's book,

[1] Letter cited in introd. to J. A. Farrer's ed. of the *Crimes and Punishments*, 1880, p. 6.
[2] *Id.* p. 3.

acclaimed by all the Voltairean school in France, had in a generation gone far to transform the cruel criminal law of Europe before Bentham gave his great impulse to its scientific reconstruction in England. Of Bentham it was hardly too much to say, as J. S. Mill did after his death, that "he found jurisprudence a chaos and left it a science." But he did more: he found criminal law, after all the work of Howard, still largely a matter of barbaric revenge, and he forced it into the path of rational social protection which it has followed ever since; though, sooth to say, it has still far to go. The personal effort of Bentham to establish his scheme of a prison (called a 'Panopticon') in which the inmates should be under a constant humane surveillance, whether sound or not, represented an amount of active effort towards human betterment that is not to be associated with the name of any previous moralist of any school.

Had he been more of a philosopher and less of a practical reformer he might have more effectively confuted the absolutist mode of moral philosophy, which, like legitimism in politics, continued to claim to rule after its reign had been exploded. Intuitionism, as we have seen, had been fought in the Revolution with its own weapons. The Rights of Man had been declared to be embodied in the Law of Nature, 'eternal and immutable,' upon which the rule of arbitrary kings was a usurpation. Beyond alleging that the revolutionists knew they were lying, intuitionism had no answer to make; it never has made any answer insofar as it is identified with conservatism in politics. Had Bentham been sufficiently intent on the theoretic problem he would have followed up his primary utilitarianism by pointing out how apriorism had recoiled upon itself, and how the 'interests of morality,' which had been alleged to depend absolutely on the à priori view of right and wrong, were now, from the orthodox standpoint, being overthrown by men who obviously held à priori views of right and wrong. But Bentham, always intensely bent on practical betterment, was content simply to attack the "Anarchical Fallacies" of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man (a plain adaptation, though he did not say so, of the American Declaration), and to defend law and order by the test of utility. The rational answer to anarchical apriorism thus came from utilitarianism; orthodox apriorism, in the nature of the case, could offer nothing but vituperation. Bentham had avowed how, beginning his PRINCIPLES with the straightforward purpose of vindicating the utility test by way of an introduction to a plan of a penal code, he soon "found himself

unexpectedly entangled in an unsuspected corner of the metaphysical maze."[1] Strictly speaking, he never disentangled himself; had he done so he would have logically identified the fallacies of orthodox apriorism with those of the anarchistic. But he seems never to have made it clear to himself that he too had his intuitionist basis; that his very utilitarianism is in turn intuitionist; and that the ultimate task of ethics is *the revision of intuitions*, though at the outset he had acutely affirmed that "there is, or rather there ought to be, a logic of the will as well as of the understanding."[2]

The result is that, while Bentham's establishment of the utility test as against all apriorism *has never been refuted, and is irrefutable, even as his criticism of sheer intuitionism is unanswerable*, he has damaged his own foundations by his denial of 'natural rights,' very much as Hobbes did his. Instead of relying on his own principle as against the incoherent apriorism of the revolutionary doctrine, which was logically on all fours with the orthodox apriorism that he had confuted in his early PRINCIPLES, he chose to deny that the conception of natural rights had any basis in nature. This denial really deprived him of his ground for attacking unjust laws. "How stands the truth of things?" he asks. And he puts his answer in the crudely paralogistic form that "there are no *such things as* natural rights; no such things as rights anterior to the establishment of government; no such things as natural rights opposed to, in contradistinction to, legal."[3] Passing the verbal paralogism, we note that either the critic is claiming that 'rights' *by definition* mean 'legal rights,' in which case the argument is verbiage, or he is denying that men had the *conception* of rights when they had only a code of customs, before any 'laws' were formulated as such. Now, this is certainly wrong. Hobbes had put the antidote to *his* legalism in the declaration that all men 'by nature' had the 'right' to defend themselves; and Bentham could not possibly show either that they did not *feel* it to be a right, or that they had not the idea before they made laws to *secure* the right. He has cut the bough on which he sits. The bulk of his own life's work was the rectification of law in terms of the sense of right which he regulated by the principle of general utility.

When he goes on: "That the expression is *merely* figurative; that, when used, in the moment you attempt to give it a literal meaning, it leads to error, and to that sort of error that leads to

[1] Pref. to *Principles*, par. 2. [2] *Id.* par 5 from end.
[3] *Anarchical Fallacies*, vol. ii of Works.

mischief, to the extremity of mischief," he is arguing soundly, save for the loose use of 'merely.' The term is not *merely* figurative, save as 'right' and 'rule' and a thousand other words are primarily figurative. It is an assertion that the wrongness of much existing law is deducible from the principle of reciprocity, which the lawgivers *profess to recognize*. But it is certainly true that to argue directly and without test from the principle of reciprocity to any positive political claim whatever is just as dangerous when it is done by a group or party or movement as when it is done by a king or a priesthood. That being so, such, and such only, should have been Bentham's confutation of revolutionary absolutism. His outcry: "*Natural rights* is simple nonsense; natural and imprescriptible rights rhetorical nonsense," invited the retort: "Your greatest happiness principle is simple nonsense and also rhetorical nonsense; you dare not ask whether the division of the land among the French peasantry has not made more men happy than it has made unhappy." The retort would have been quite inconclusive, but not more so than the outbreak. The simple truth was that Bentham had written in a rage, quite in the intuitionist manner, and had erred accordingly.

He who had been detested for rejecting orthodox intuitionism doubtless won credit by attacking heterodox intuitionism, which orthodoxy could not answer; but when the revolutionary peril was over he was of course not accorded any further recognition from that side. Meanwhile, he did his real service energetically and unfalteringly, being in fact one of the most powerful writers of his age. His second published work is an enduring illustration of the value of the utilitarian test for the revision of intuitions in ethics, and consequently in legislation. He called it A DEFENCE OF USURY (1787). It is really not that, but an argument, accompanied by a letter to Adam Smith, whom he confuted and seems to have convinced, against anti-usury laws as doing much harm and no good. Down to the day of Shakespeare the Church had taught that all usury is morally wrong; and, though that teaching succumbed to the force of events, one of the lapses of Adam Smith was to argue in support of the law which set a legal limit to interest. By the simple test of utility Bentham showed that the supposed social benefit was imaginary and that real social damage resulted. The à priori ethic had yielded theoretic error and practical injury; the à posteriori method had pointed out the injury and by consequence the error; and the truth of the demonstration has been recognized by the legislatures of the world.

The public spirit animating all Bentham's life, and the practical fruitfulness of much of his teaching even alongside of the frustration of many of his political efforts, naturally set his antagonists upon a policy of personal criticism. He was wilful, nervously self-conscious, apt to be captious, rather cliquish, gusty even in his systematic books—a curious mixture, in short, of indiscipline and disciplinary zeal. But Mackintosh saw fit to say of Bentham and his school that "as he and they deserve the credit of braving vulgar prejudices, so they must be content to incur the imputation of falling into the neighbouring vices of seeking distinction by singularity, of clinging to opinions because they are obnoxious, of wantonly wounding the most respectable feelings of mankind,"[1] and so forth, prefacing a hopelessly erroneous statement to the effect that Bentham's disciples drew their opinions mainly from oral converse with the master. Notoriously this was not the fact.

Whewell in his turn shows his irritation against Bentham by a mass of small criticism, some of it valid, but most of it so trivial as to reveal that his object is not, as in previous lectures, to trace the history of British ethics, but to create by any means a reaction against Bentham's prestige, which he avows to have been very great. Both critics, in their anxiety to disparage the utilitarian method, contrive to miss the vital question of its corrective value. The test of utility, says Mackintosh, is everywhere recognized as a necessary part of every moral theory; but it does not follow that we should make it the "chief motive of human conduct." Neither a regard to our own interest nor a desire to promote that of men in general is the "most effectual motive" to useful actions. Even on utilitarian principles, in fact, we should "cultivate, as excitements to practice, those *other* habitual dispositions which we know by experience to be generally the source of actions beneficial to ourselves and others; habits of feeling, productive of virtuous conduct.....that state of mind in which all the social affections are felt with the utmost warmth,"[2] etc., etc.

This is not only a begging of the question, but an *ignoratio elenchi*. Bentham really did make such appeals as Mackintosh called for, and made them impressively and powerfully; but he held that that was not nearly enough. The methods of meditating on virtue and cultivating the social affections without conscious regard to utility had been familiar in the ancient as in the modern world; but it would have puzzled the critic to show where they had reformed it. The cultivation of the social affections could be pursued without the slightest ensuing restraint on war, slavery, cruelty, and persecution. Beccaria and Bentham, by an express appeal to utility, had

[1] *On the Progress of Ethical Philosophy*, 4th ed. p. 188. [2] *Id.* p. 194.

convinced multitudes of thinking men that legal cruelties were injurious to society, and had so wrought for their suppression, thus doing in half a century more than Christian charity had achieved in an era. Mackintosh had simply not paused to ask what kind of actions *were* 'useful' to mankind in general, and had refused to face the fact that an infinity of action commonly sanctioned as moral was injurious because its utility or inutility was never critically considered. Had he wished to put a caveat against the possible misinterpretation of utilitarianism as prescribing a selfish calculation before the doing of any kindly act, he might have been well employed, though all utilitarians pleaded for *rules* founded on well-considered utility, not for a fresh inquiry over every act. But Mackintosh's whole criticism is one of sentimental antagonism not only to the principle of utility in ethics, but to Bentham and Bentham's associates; and he actually turns from criticism of Bentham to rate James Mill as having said that "courage is only prudence," when Mill had really said that "courage is but a species of the *acts* of prudence,"[1] which conveys a quite different idea from the phrase given. That is, in fact, really assignable to Plato-Socrates.[2]

Whewell's criticism, when it applies to cardinal issues, turns on the old argument that we cannot calculate the effects of our actions, and that, for instance, utility gives no guidance when one is tempted to utter a flattering falsehood.[3] A little candour here on Whewell's part might have abridged debate.[4] He knew well enough that most people do at times tell flattering falsehoods: he had probably done it himself. Why, then, do they allow themselves that latitude in one direction which they would not take in another? Surely because they believe that a flattering falsehood does no harm worth mentioning as compared with the pleasant atmosphere it may create. If, then, Whewell meant to argue that a flattering falsehood is to be condemned whether it does harm or not, why did he not plainly say so? He merely argues that we cannot *know* whether it does more harm than good. and that therefore we must act as if we knew that it tended to do harm as we know serious falsehoods do. He then proceeds to affirm that "on this ground the construction of a scheme of morality on Mr. Bentham's plan is plainly impossible"[5]—this, after denouncing Bentham for unfairness in describing the principle of asceticism (self-mortification) as opposed to the principle of utility.

To what, then, does Whewell's own criticism lead us? He

[1] *Analysis of the Human Mind*, ed. 1869, ii, 283. [2] *Protagoras*, 350, 360; *Laches*, 195.
[3] *Lectures*, p. 224.
[4] Mill, who discusses the point in his criticism of Whewell, neatly suggests that one may flatter without lying. But the term connotes something of untruth.
[5] *Id.* p. 225.

has no grounds for condemning lying of any kind save one or all of these four: (1) Reciprocity ('Lie not, that thou be not lied to'); (2) Personal utility ('Lie not, because lying destroys confidence: the liar is loathed and shunned'); (3) Public utility (in that industry and security depend on general veracity and fulfilment of promises); or (4) Future penalties (a Biblical text having informed us that liars after death will be plunged in a lake of brimstone). If, then, on all or any of these grounds it is as wrong to flatter as it is to defraud, it is also wrong to lie to a would-be criminal or an enemy (deceiving him in order to save others), or even to tell a soothing untruth to one very ill, whom the true news might kill. In most of these cases it must be impossible for each person to calculate all the possible effects of telling the untruth.

But that is only the beginning of the dilemma. A savage or a Catholic, let us say, has been taught that an act of irreverence to an altar or a sacred image is deserving of death. He has been told so on high authority; and he feels that it is true. If, then, he sees such an act committed, and is told that it is 'better' to let the offender go than have him arrested and either lynched or condemned to death, his very difficulty, on Whewell's negative principle, should preclude hesitation. In fine, on Whewell's negative principle, there could never have been any *revision* of an ethic held to be either divinely imposed or justified by moral intuition. Heretic-burning, witch-burning, slavery, religious persecution of every kind, human sacrifice, capital punishment for all manner of offences—all the pageant of cruelties ever wrought in the name of religion and morality would have gone on unchanged.

Seeing that Whewell, like Mackintosh, all the while admitted that the principle of utility is inseparable from ethics, he must be held guilty of obscuring the issue in the interests of his theology. A quite honest scrutiny of the problem would have yielded him arguments much better calculated to put men on their guard against the dangers of an inconsiderate resort to the test of utility. The long-established practice of judicial torture, for instance, is visibly a case of blundering about utility. Men reasoned that by torture they could get the truth in a criminal inquiry in which it could be reached in no other way. The obvious rebuttal is that if they did not know the truth they could not know the guilt of any one they tortured; yet they tortured not only men *proved* guilty, but those merely suspected of guilty knowledge. The whole procedure should have been barred by the accepted principle of justice, the law of reciprocity; and there is no more terrible proof of the immanence of iniquity in mankind than the long subsistence of the abomination under the auspices alike of law and religion. Evidently, then, a regimen of utility from which the considera-

tion of justice or reciprocity is excluded would be truly a dangerous course. Justice, of course, comes instantly within the conception of utility when broadly considered. But what the critic of the utilitarian principle may fairly contend is that 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' can very easily *seem* to the hasty thinker to sanction acts of iniquity towards individuals or minorities.

The fact was, however, that thinkers of Whewell's cast were about the least concerned over *that* kind of false utilitarianism. They had never repugned at the doctrine that "one man should die for the people" in its canonical Christian form. They were as a rule perfectly ready to acquiesce in any suspension of popular liberty, in the punishment of freethinking as 'vice,' and in penalties upon dissent, to say nothing of the whole system of the privileges of the State Church. Inequities in the franchise, justified on the score of political utility, usually seemed to them to need no other justification. What moved them to resist the systematic application of the utilitarian test was either a genuine fear that men might use it to override moralities which *they* knew to be useful, or an unavowable fear that they could not demonstrate the utility of certain established practices which they desired to have regarded as moralities. And it is difficult to doubt that the latter form of apprehension mainly inspired such resistance as Whewell's to Bentham's undertaking.

For Whewell coupled with his test case of the flattering falsehood that of illegitimate sensual pleasure. In effect, he told the students of Cambridge that, for all he knew, sexual vice might do no serious harm either to the individual or to society—a proposition at which Paley, to say nothing of Burns and Shelley, would have exclaimed in horror. Yet it does not appear that this moral 'howler' ever created any consternation in the camp of what Whewell called 'independent morality.' It would appear that he and his school would rather have it felt that there *could* be no valid utilitarian argument against sexual vice—that youth should be left free to hold that vice was not demonstrably harmful in *this* life—than that, by such a demonstration, 'morality' could be shown to be as safe without as with a belief in future rewards and punishments. Such are the practical immoralities of the ethic whose exponents habitually acclaim it as 'high' and asperse utilitarian morality as 'low.'

The hostile side of the criticism passed upon Bentham by Mill in 1838 has naturally been seized upon with avidity by writers of theological training or sympathies like Dr. Albee, who[1] quotes with avidity everything that Mill says in disparage-

[1] In his *History of English Utilitarianism*, p. 204.

ment of Bentham, and little of the very high praise which so much more than outweighs the disparagement. The dispraise seems to reflect the highly unjudicial influence of Carlyle, Maurice, and Sterling, which was then strong over Mill. And it is unjudicially and crudely put; some of it indeed being explicitly contradicted by Mill himself in the same article, while some expresses the most unscientific and futile of his own ideas.

Dr. Albee admiringly quotes the assertion of Mill that the success of one who "attempts the adequate treatment of Ethics" will be in proportion to the extent of (1) his knowledge of "man's nature and circumstances," and (2) "his capacity of deriving light from other minds." After quoting Mill's remark that Bentham knew little of other systems than his own, Dr. Albee puts the sentence: "All ethical theories differing from his own he dismissed as 'vague generalities.'" This is a bad confusion, suggesting that Mill's remark on this point is in context with those before quoted. It is not; and it does not apply to Bentham's treatment of other ethical systems. It could not, for Mill has twice over quoted Bentham's long note of summary criticism of previous systems, in which he does *not* characterize them as 'vague generalities.' And Mill's own criticism is loosely and badly put, for he knew very well that Bentham *had* learned from other minds, in particular Hume, Montesquieu, Helvétius, and Beccaria. The fact that Bentham was extravagantly contemptuous of *some* previous thinkers is compatible with his learning from others. For that matter, Mill himself, in his UTILITARIANISM, gives small sign of having learned much from any other school, and no great evidence of deep study of his own.

But his general proposition as to learning from previous writers is uncritically and inequitably put, as if it held specially of Bentham. It holds of most system-makers and independent moralists. Neither Locke nor Butler, neither Berkeley nor Hutcheson, neither Kant nor Fichte, will satisfy Mill's implicit demand that the moral philosopher should derive all the light he can from other minds. Kant is described as increasingly incapable, in the latter half even of his efficient life, of following other men's thought. Spencer is notably in the same category. Doubtless none of these has reached an "*adequate* treatment of ethics," if 'adequate' means 'conclusive'; but why is Bentham to be singled out for a censure incurred by all?

Mill's quite unjustifiable statement that the 'vague generalities' of which Bentham so often complained "contained the whole unanalysed experience of the human race" is eagerly seized on by Dr. Albee, who can no more justify it than Mill could. The assertion as it stands is demonstrably absurd, whatever Mill may have meant by it, and we may suspect that it is the echo of another's thought. But Dr. Albee is heedless

enough in his animus to commit himself to Mill's egregious proposition that "A philosophy of laws and institutions not founded on a philosophy of national character is an absurdity." This is Mill's abortive and worthless formula of Ethology, which he put in the LOGIC [1] as the necessary basis of a sociology, and of which, *as Dr. Albee knew*,[2] he never produced a single page, finding the undertaking hopeless.[3] The doctrine of 'national character' is the *proton pseudos*, the primary error, of all pseudo-sociology;[4] and the fact that an abundant output of competent sociology has since taken place, not least notably in the United States, with the most complete disregard of Mill's prescription, may be recommended to the attention of those who, like Dr. Albee, are ready to endorse Mill at this point merely because he is disparaging Bentham.

The worst of the matter is that the only possible meaning which could be attached to Mill's criticism at this point without involving his Ethology doctrine would be an entirely untrue criticism of Bentham. Many readers, indeed, will be likely to infer that Mill charged Bentham with planning abstract legislation without regard to the diversities of life and usage in the nations; and this may be the interpretation in Dr. Albee's mind when he claims that Mill's absurd sentence "is manifestly true," and that it "takes away much from the force of his eulogium" of Bentham's services to jurisprudence. But Mill has himself, in the same essay, testified that "*the different exigencies of different nations with respect to law* occupied his [Bentham's] attention *as systematically as any other portion of the wants which render laws necessary;* with the limitations, it is true, which were set to all his speculations by the imperfections of his theory of human nature."[5]

The last clause refers, not to Bentham's omission to construct Mill's will-o'-the-wisp Ethology, but to the shortcoming he has charged upon Bentham in respect of failure to recognize the 'higher' motives in human conduct. Now, assuming for the moment that this charge is valid, its irrelevance to Bentham's work in jurisprudence may be sufficiently indicated by a passage of Mill's own writing, in an article penned within a year of the essay on Bentham:—

> "We are the last persons to undervalue the power of moral convictions. But the convictions of the mass of mankind run hand in hand with their interests or with their class feelings. We have a strong faith, stronger than either politicians or philosophers generally have, in the influence of reason and virtue over men's minds; but it is in that of the reason and virtue of their own side of the question."[6]

Could there be a better answer to the pretence that a special

[1] Bk. vi, ch. 5. [2] See his next chapter, p. 229. [3] Bain, *J. S. Mill*, pp. 78–9.
[4] Mill held the notion of 'national character' in a special form, as expressing the effects of institutions, etc. But that is not a theory of 'character' at all, in the only relevant sense of the term.
[5] Essay on Bentham in *Dissertations and Discussions*, 1859, i, 375.
[6] Cited by Bain in his *J. S. Mill: A Criticism*, pp. 53–4.

study of the best men's highest motives is the proper business of the reformer of jurisprudence? That Mill should pose as specially percipient of men's higher motives on the strength of such 'faith' in them as he here parades and stultifies is specially suggestive of the need for caution in weighing his estimate of Bentham. Mill himself actually taught that it was inexpedient to effect mitigations by international law of the savageries of war, arguing that the extremity of savagery would best set men against war altogether. That hardly tells of recognition of men's higher motives, and it would probably not have been acquiesced in by Bentham.

For the rest, Mill passes upon Bentham a praise which Dr. Albee in effect ignores. He ascribes to him a "rare union of self-reliance and *moral sensibility*"[1]—an offset to his ostensibly countervailing criticism which the discerning student will note. On one page[2] Mill says that nobody before Bentham had the courage to speak out against many gross abuses; on the next he says that such courage is not rare. But he expressly avows that Bentham differs from most of the 'reforming' philosophers of his youth in being positive where they were merely negative[3]—a criticism of doubtful justice, but expressly laudatory of Bentham; and he assents to the verdict of a high authority,[4] not a Benthamite, that to Bentham more than to any other was due the 'questioning spirit' in the generation after him. Mill dubs him "the father of English innovation."[5] And, insisting that it was not the opinions but the method of Bentham that "constituted the novelty and the value of what he did," Mill adds: "*a value beyond all price*, even though we should reject the whole, as we unquestionably must a large part, of the opinions themselves."[6] This makes short work of most of the subsequent disparagement, considered as an estimate of Bentham's general service to moral science.

Mill's memory pays the penalty of his ill-balanced pronouncements when he is so cited as to show only the worst side of them. Wherever he has ground in the mills of the Philistines he is still industriously pictured in that attitude, and then himself disparaged all the same. It is therefore still necessary to point out how wanting in wisdom are some of the generalizations for which he is still cited by writers of Dr. Albee's school. One of the oftenest quoted passages in the essay under notice is the Carlylean statement[7] that Bentham's "lot was cast in a generation of the leanest and barrenest men whom England had yet produced; and he was an old man when a better race came in with the present century."[8] The

[1] Essay on Bentham in *Diss. and Disc.*, i, 237. [2] Ed. cited, p. 333.
[3] *Id.* p. 338. [4] Not named. P. 332. [5] *Id.* p. 334. [6] *Id.* p. 339.
[7] "A dreary, death-struck age" is Carlyle's account of eighteenth-century England in his essay on Johnson.
[8] Essay cited, p. 355.

aspersed half-century contained Johnson, Chatham, Burke, Fox, Pitt, Gibbon, Horne Tooke, Sheridan, Cowper Crabbe, Chatterton, Goldsmith (who, like Burke, settled in England as a young man), Priestley, Price, Paley, Raikes, Wesley, the two Tuckers (Abraham and the Dean), Arthur Young, Thomas Paine, Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Gilbert White, Cavendish, Sir Joseph Banks, John Hunter (Scotch born, coming to England at twenty), William Herschel (who came to England at sixteen), and Dalton (whose memoir on colour blindness was produced in 1794). As the question is finally one of influences on mental life, it is obviously relevant to add to these names those of Hume and Smith, who affected the whole thought of Europe, and notably that of Bentham. It is true that England for generations after Newton was backward in the extension of the *mathematical* sciences; but these counted for least in Bentham's case; and in the other sciences and 'criticism of life' generally the names just noted are surely decisive. These are but the foremost names of an age in which much progressive work was done by lesser men; and to call such an age one of the leanest and barrenest men that England ever produced is to exhibit something like incapacity for a sound sociological estimate.

It is to be observed that in our own age a number of authorities have passed a somewhat similar judgment on the *first* half of the eighteenth century, absurdly describing *that* as an age of intellectual barrenness and languor.[1] Sidgwick was capable of that blunder, with the names of Shaftesbury, Mandeville, Berkeley, Butler, Hutcheson, Gay, Hume, and Hartley under his eye. On such methods of historical assessment it is hard to see when England ever achieved anything in the intellectual life. And the absurdity of the whole procedure becomes doubly clear when we find that, just as Sidgwick in his own old age found "the philosophic mind of the modern world at an ebb,"[2] so Mill, after drawing his contrast between the last generation of the eighteenth century and the first of the nineteenth, described the generation of his own middle age as everywhere losing all individuality, and dangerously approaching to moral and intellectual uniformity.[3] The generation thus described included Carlyle, Emerson, Ruskin, Macaulay, Grote, Thirlwall, Cobden, Bright, Gladstone, Disraeli, Lowe, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, Bain, Lewes, George Eliot, Bagehot, Hutton, Lytton, Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, the Brownings, Arnold, Clough, Froude, Freeman, the Newmans, Colenso, Buckle, Joule, Kelvin, Clerk Maxwell, Hugh Miller, Lyell, Wallace—to say nothing of a hundred-and-one minor poets and novelists and men of science. If *that* generation is to be

[1] See details in the author's *Bolingbroke and Walpole*, 1919, pp. 240–54.
[2] *Mind*, 1900, p. 10.
[3] *On Liberty*, 1859, ch. 3.

described as dangerously lacking in individuality, social science becomes a pastime for young men's debating clubs. It is hardly too much to say that on some sides Mill was at times dangerously lacking in good sense. Soon after the time of writing he was proclaiming himself the mere mouthpiece of the inspired Superwoman, his wife. But the general solution of the aberrations before us may be that, like so many less thoughtful men, he spontaneously tended in his youth to see only the advances made in his day as compared with that before it, and when grown elderly tended as spontaneously to see a lack of remarkableness in his later contemporaries as compared with the earlier, never staying to ask whether the explanation was not that in youth we are much more susceptible to impressions from those around us than in middle age, when our impressions have been immensely multiplied. The same 'pathetic fallacy' is visible in much modern talk about 'early Victorian' matters.

But Mill unfortunately incurs a charge of grave ignorance in respect of yet others of his sociological judgments. Even Dr. Albee is moved to demur to his assertion in the essay on Coleridge that what he calls the "Germano-Coleridgean school" were "the first, *except a solitary thinker here and there*,[1] who inquired with any comprehensiveness or depth into the inductive laws of the existence and growth of human society.....They thus produced, not a piece of party advocacy, but a philosophy of society, in the only form in which it is yet possible, that of a philosophy of history."[2] This is outrageously wrong. The philosophy of society and of history, begun, broadly speaking, by Vico, was much developed in France by Montesquieu, somewhat by Voltaire and Rousseau, much by Walckenaer; and much in Britain by Hume, Smith, Ferguson, Millar, and Dunbar, in a mainly scientific spirit. The main 'Germano-Coleridgean' contributions were the IDEEN of Herder (1784–91), who drew much of his inspiration from Rousseau, and Hegel's PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY (1837), which last was not relevant to Mill's claim. The work of Friedrich Schlegel has small sociological value. The sociological essays of Hume should alone have moved Mill to cancel his aberrant judgment;[3] of such men as Dunbar and Walckenaer he seems to have known nothing. It is not surprising that at that period many of Mill's associates regarded him as largely given up to obscurantism. To the philosophy of society nothing was contributed by Coleridge, who furiously countered the speculations of French rationalists with the historiography of the

[1] The idea here seems to be that a solitary thinker does not count as compared with a group. But how was the group constituted of which Mill speaks?
[2] *Dissertations*, as cited, i, 425.
[3] His intense animus against Hume as a historian (Bain, *J. S. Mill*, p. 34) would blind him on this side.

Pentateuch.[1] Coleridge's philosophic merits lie in other aspects, to which Mill did more than justice. But the effort to find the good in a system antagonistic to his own doubtless 'leans to virtue's side.'

Bentham may fairly be charged with retarding his own cause by omitting to examine considerately the question of the ostensibly intuitive process by which men approve and disapprove of actions, as Butler and so many others had said, without thought of their consequences. He also omitted, as we have seen, to clear up carefully the question of 'obligation.' He simply took for granted the spontaneity of ordinary moral judgments, and went on to challenge the intuitionists to give a reason for their moral faith. The real trouble, in his eyes, was that they let their faith (often visibly a matter of mere moral habit, convention, and training) decide for them in support of actions which were demonstrably *wrong* not only in terms of social utility but of the law of reciprocity which they professed to accept. And as the habit of following the ostensible intuition was obviously unlikely to be altered by an appeal to intuition, he methodically set himself to make utility the general test. But to say this is to take all meaning out of Mill's youthfully perverse comments, so eagerly seized on by the intuitionists as an 'admission,' that "nothing is more curious than the absence of *recognition* in any of his [Bentham's] writings of the existence of conscience as a thing distinct from philanthropy, from affection for God or man, and from self-interest in this world and the next"; that he never appeals to "self-respect," never recognizes man "as a being capable of pursuing spiritual perfection as an end"; never speaks of "the sense of *honour* and personal dignity.....the love of *beauty*, the passion of the artist; the love of *order*, of congruity, of consistency in all things, and conformity to their end,"[2] and so forth. Whewell, whose prejudiced criticism of Bentham Mill was later to grind exceeding small, could hardly have been more unjust. Bentham was the very zealot of "congruity and consistency in all things" that he dealt with; his passion for them stamps all his writing, from first to last. A hundred passages could be cited from his works in rebuttal of the *spirit* of Mill's charge, even if he did not employ the terms for which Mill stipulated. In regard to benevolence, he is second to no writer on jurisprudence in his insistence on the duty of the legislator "to give new force to the sentiment of benevolence"; to which he adds the stipulation: "to

[1] Essay on the *Prometheus*.

[2] Essay on Bentham, pp. 359–60.

regulate its application according to the principle of utility." It is he who in that connection writes: "A time will come when humanity will spread its mantle over everything that breathes."[1] His ethical creed might not unfairly be summed up by his sentence: "Men must be freed from fear and oppression before they can be taught to love each other."[2]

As regards the so-called higher motives, on the other hand, Bentham expressly set himself (*a*) to show how such terms as *honour*, *glory*, and *dignity* were habitually used to promote unnecessary and unjust wars,[3] and (*b*) to discredit such procedure by the ethic of utility. To censure him as Mill does here is to complain that he set himself to apply ethics to politics and jurisprudence instead of merely appealing to moral sentiment, and Mill does this while avowing that "It is *fortunate for the world* that Bentham's taste lay rather in the direction of jurisprudential than of properly ethical inquiry."[4] And this last clause, with its false use of 'properly,' is confuted by Mill's own admissions, (1) that the regulation of men's outward actions is a "co-equal" part of morality with moral self-education,[5] and (2) that, "in so far as Bentham's adoption of the principle of utility induced him to fix his attention upon the consequences of actions as the consideration determining their utility, he was *indisputably in the right path.*"[6]

In so far as Mill challenges Bentham, on the other hand, for applying the principle of Greatest Happiness without considering the dangers of a universal reign of public opinion over all conduct, he was really putting a sound and an important criticism, which needs to be chronically re-considered; and he notably grounded his criticism not on the principle of justice but on the principle of utility. When, however, he reverts to his complaint against Bentham for not being something else than a scientific moralist he does but reveal the turn for inconsistency which so seriously affects his own philosophic work. Nothing, he says, has tended more to place Bentham "in opposition to the common feelings of mankind, and to give to his philosophy that cold, mechanical, and ungenial air which characterizes the popular idea of a Benthamite" than—a peculiarity "which belongs to him.....*in common with almost all professed moralists.*"[7] Incoherence could no further go, whatever the peculiarity may have been. But when it is thus indicated: "Every human action has three aspects: its *moral* aspect, or that

[1] *Principles of the Penal Code*, as cited (p. 429).
[2] *Id. ib.*
[3] *On Houses of Peers and Senates* (Works, iv, 437–38).
[4] Essay on Bentham, p. 364.
[5] *Id.* pp. 363–64.
[6] *Id.* p. 386.
[7] *Id.* p. 386.

of its *right* and *wrong*; its *æsthetic* aspect, or that of its *beauty*; its *sympathetic* aspect, or that of its loveableness"; and when the criticism turns out to be that Bentham *as* a moralist put himself out of touch with the multitude by *being* a moralist, instead of an essayist on moral æsthetics, we are once more compelled to note how Mill himself compromises his ethical system—never, indeed, so flagrantly as here—by chronically shifting from a *professed* utilitarianism to something else.

That weakness we shall have to consider in the next section. As to Bentham we may now sum up that by Mill's own admission, as by that of Whewell, his influence in his latter life had become one of the greatest wielded in his age; that it was an influence which no æsthetic essayist could have wielded; and that further, in virtue of the rare moral sensibility which Mill himself ascribes to him, he was far in advance of his age in the humane considerateness of his ethic on points in regard to which the æsthetic essayists of his age had nothing to say. He was one of the first, after Milton, to make an earnest appeal for an extension of freedom of divorce; and it was Mill who later cited Bentham's early and eloquent demand for a legal protection of animals as "this noble anticipation, in 1780,[1] of the better morality of which a first dawn has been seen in laws enacted nearly fifty years afterwards."[2] This circumstance, remembered by Mill in 1852, had apparently been forgotten by him in 1838.[3]

It must have been a wayward mood that induced a serious reformer to say, as does Mill in the essay on Bentham, that Bentham's philosophy "can teach the means of organizing and regulating the merely *business* part of the social arrangements."[4] A few pages further on, he avows that "*Law* is a matter of *business*";[5] and later he was even to commit himself—here adopting

[1] *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ch. xvii, § 4, *note*. Bentham all his life fought for this reform. See his *Principles of the Penal Code* (in the *Theory of Legislation*, Eng. trans. ed. 1891), pt. iv, ch. 16.

[2] Essay on "Dr. Whewell on Moral Philosophy," 1852. Rep. in *Diss. and Disc.* ii, 483.

[3] In the case of Mill's attitude to Bentham in 1838 two things are worth keeping in view. He had suffered in 1836 what Bain twice emphasizes as an affection of the brain (*J. S. Mill*, pp. 42, 44), different from any other of his illnesses, leaving him long depressed. Under those circumstances, the influence of Carlyle, Maurice, and Sterling, all thoroughly incapable of a just appreciation of Bentham, may well have got the upper hand to some extent in his cerebration. There is also to be surmised in the young Mill a lack of personal regard for Bentham, who to the last had a self-centred and whimsical personality. The "sober-blooded boy," who in his boyhood's days was never juvenile, was conceivably not impressed by the boyishness of temperament he saw in Bentham. Replying to Brougham's attack on Bentham as jealous and splenetic in private life (a revenge for Bentham's attacks on Brougham), Mill explains that Bentham "had the freshness, the simplicity, the confidingness, the liveliness and activity, all the delightful qualities of boyhood, and the weaknesses are the reverse side of these qualities." This is hardly an indemnification for admittedly 'unreasonable' attacks on Brougham; but it suggests that the unalterably young-old philosopher may not have very satisfactorily impressed the prematurely adult one, who in early life saw a good deal of his senior.

[4] *Id.* p. 366.

[5] *Id.* p. 372.

an error of Bentham's—to the exaggeration that law is the *idée mère* of justice. To speak, then, of the system of law, which seeks to secure justice, protection, and order for mankind, which by error can work untold cruelty and misery, and by inefficiency can leave helplessness and innocence a prey to wrong incalculable—to speak of this as the *merely* business part of the social arrangements is to give such a flout to "the common feelings of mankind" as Bentham never offered.

The strength of the animus felt against Bentham by most men trained in an à priori ethic is surprisingly revealed by so generally catholic a writer as Professor J. S. Mackenzie, in a work so generally wise as his INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY. There he writes :—

> "That the great intellectual forces of our time are not individualistic we see at once when we.....close our Bentham and open our Comte, when we close our Herbert Spencer and open our Hegel. Individualism, indeed, properly speaking, said its last word in Hume and in the French Revolution."[1]

Much might be said on the extreme unfitness of the use here made of the term individualism, on the almost unintelligible reference to Hume and the French Revolution, on the ignoring of the fact that Spencer comes long after Hegel, and on the bland assumption that Hegel's gospel of the State is ethically superior to Spencer's. Recent experience may suggest to the Professor's readers a different attitude on State-regarding ethics. But the animus of the reference to Bentham calls for special notice. Bentham actually effected, by common testimony, a great advance towards social justice because he took a practicable course. Comte socially effected nothing because he proposed an impracticable one—really a continuation of the special French passion for social regulation, deriving alike from Catholicism and from autocracy. We may open our Comte as much as we like, and not without profit; but the social scheme of Comte will no more be realized than Plato's Republic.

The conspicuous inequity here shown towards Bentham is fully accounted for when we read in the same work that "Though the superficiality and emptiness of the Benthamite position are now pretty universally acknowledged, yet in more refined and emasculated forms Utilitarianism has still a considerable hold on English thought,"[2] and the footnote: "It has perhaps ceased to have much hold on English *ethical* thought; but it is certainly still the dominant view among writers on *Economics*." Throughout his own treatise, Professor Mackenzie invariably applies the utilitarian test to every practical social

[1] Work cited, p. 124.

[2] *Id.* p. 372.

proposition. He is thus at one with the English latter-day convention which tacitly adopts Utilitarianism and professes to have rejected it. What his MANUAL really reveals is the superficiality of all the intuitionist criticisms of the utility test, and the final emptiness of all intuitionist positions, Kant's in particular. His judgment finally seems to prove the impossibility, for one trained in intuitionism, of being just to the ethic which puts a dynamic principle in the vacuum left by the idealist's evasion of the real moral problem.[1] Nothing could be more misleading in this connection than the Professor's statement[2] that Bentham and Mill (whom he classes as Hedonists) "did not clearly distinguish between egoistic and universalistic Hedonism, and consequently, *though in the main supporting only the latter, often* seemed to be giving their adhesion to the former." Bentham and Mill were not responsible for a piece of faulty terminology which is itself a confusion; but a writer who, in effect, charges them with "often seeming" to argue for egoism ought at least to give some evidence. The flat self-contradiction fallen into by Prof. Mackenzie when he seeks to overthrow Mill will be considered in the next section; here it may suffice that no one could gather from his books what Bentham sought and achieved.

His fundamental quarrel with Bentham, presumably, is in respect of his own Kantian position that "the laws of ethics differ from all other laws in being not hypothetical [*i.e.* conditional] but categorical."[3] If only Bentham could be reincarnated to dissect that formula, ethics would gain. It is, first, untrue. The laws of the State are 'categorical'; the Ten Commandments are 'categorical'—that is to say, unconditionally imperative. Secondly, the thing contended for is worthless; to *call* a moral prescription 'categorical,' while admitting, with Kant, that it is never fulfilled, is to keep moral philosophy in the slough of futility first dug for it by theology. If it be seriously alleged that the purpose of ethics is merely to formulate what you *feel* to be 'oughts,' and to assert that your 'ought' is 'unconditionally imperative,' all the contempt ever expressed

[1] The method of Prof. Mackenzie's *Manual*, in which historical method can enter only by way of footnotes, makes it perhaps impossible for him there to give a fair account of Benthamism; and in his usual way he balances one view with another—a 'cf.' which really suggests that the first note does not properly indicate the facts. But while he attempts thus some air of justice towards Bentham, he feels bound to characterize as doggerel the lines in which that moralist summed up his careful schema of mensuration of pleasure and pain:—

Intense, long, certain, speedy, fruitful, sure;
Such marks in *pleasures* and in *pains* endure.
Such pleasures seek, if *private* be thy end;
If it be public, wide let them *extend.*
Such *pains* avoid, whichever be thy view;
If pains *must* come, let them *extend* to few.
—(*Principles of Morals.*)

The lines, for a man who had no care for poetry, are fair eighteenth-century didactic verse. For their doctrinary merit and their success in condensation, which was all Bentham aimed at, the Professor has no recognition.

[2] *Manual*, p. 90.

[3] *Manual*, p. 15.

by practical men for moral philosophy is justified. Bentham sought a more serious way of serving his fellow-creatures.

That Bentham's ethic has lost all hold of English ethical thought is certainly not to be gathered from Sidgwick's OUTLINES OF THE HISTORY OF ETHICS; and the point at which Bentham is there specially challenged ought to be noted as showing how the theological tradition subsists. Bentham, says Sidgwick, in effect discards the theological doctrine of *post-mortem* pains and penalties, and "thus undoubtedly simplifies his system" by avoiding "disputable inferences." But, adds the critic,

"this gain is dearly purchased. For the question immediately arises: How, then, are the sanctions of the moral rules which it will most conduce to the general happiness for men to observe shown to be always adequate in the case of all the individuals whose observance is required? To this question Bentham nowhere attempts to give a complete answer in any treatise published by himself."[1]

It has been above observed that Bentham would have done well to give an explicit statement of the plain truth that utilitarian rules will *not* be "always adequate in the case of all." But Sidgwick, as his pupils realize, implied that, that being so, morality has broken down. Here we have the inveterate blunder of nearly all schools, the intuitionists absurdly (to use no stronger term) pretending, like the theologians, that their rattling of the 'categorical imperative' *is* or *can be* always 'adequate,' while the utilitarians seem oddly disinclined to point out that neither sanction ever did or ever conceivably will so operate. Bentham, indeed, probably did not dream that, after he had given half his life to penal science, men would ask him to say whether he expected to make all men virtuous by his ethical teaching. The astonishing thing is that such a mind as Sidgwick's should either assume that the theological rattle ever had or could have any efficacy as against criminal bias (cancelled as it is for both Catholic and Protestant by the doctrines of absolution and salvation), or should see for himself any shadow of satisfaction for the modern civilized man in the forecast either of hell or of heaven. Every dilemma that can be conjured up for the rational utilitarian by his antagonists is a cobweb beside the dilemma of the fore-ordained Inferno. It would be interesting to know whether Professor Mackenzie joins hands with Sidgwick here.

The charge of injustice to Bentham must also be made, unfortunately, against the late Professor William Wallace. It is astonishing that a critic so often careful as he was to be fair should write in a planned essay on Utilitarianism that "Hobbes's main idea is security, organization, power; Bentham's is comfort, convenience, pleasure."[2] To speak thus

[1] *Outlines*, p. 143.
[2] Essay on "Utilitarianism," in *Lectures and Essays*, 1898, p. 380.

of a life's crusade against cruelty, injustice, disorder, anomaly, and oppression is to exhibit lamentably that contempt of total human well-being by which idealism indemnifies itself for the discovery that realism is the great ameliorator of the immeasurable evil wrought on its own side. It was in this temper that Wallace took up his task. "One great shortcoming of Utilitarianism," he begins, "was that, as K. Marx says, 'it took the modern shopkeeper, especially the English shopkeeper, as the normal man.'" That was Marx's fashion of meeting every doctrine which did not seem to play into his hands. In the same fashion he vituperated 'Parson Malthus' for lack of power to confute the law of population, and, it is said, alleged that Malthus had eleven children. In the same temper, Protectionism confuted Free Trade by calling Cobden a 'bagman.' No one knew better than Wallace how false was the pretence that either Bentham or Mill wrote a moral handbook for shopkeepers. Carefully fair in his study of dead Epicureanism, however, he speaks of modern Utilitarianism, in respect of its pleasure-and-pain tests, as excluding "all the reality of life, all its positive aims and occupations."[1] That is to say, pleasures and pains, in ethics, mean only bodily sensations. What Bentham called the 'pleasures of malevolence' have their part in such criticism as this.

In this mood Wallace seemed to lose all hold on historic reality. Speaking of the reformation movement as it was in the latter part of the sixteenth century, he alleges that "for the first time since the early days of Christianity religion becomes a real, living, and governing interest in men."[2] If that be not much more than just to the Puritans, it is grossly unjust to many previous generations. Any thoughtful reader can see the obliquity of the judgment here. The perception may put him on his guard against the presuppositions which disfigure the whole essay. That remains an extremely inadequate handling of its subject.

§ 3. *William Smith.*

While Bentham put aside the whole problem, so much discussed in the eighteenth century, of the origins of moral sentiment, a very capable contribution was made to that discussion not long after his death in A DISCOURSE OF ETHICS OF THE SCHOOL OF PALEY (1839), by William Smith (1808–1872), barrister-at-law,[3] who says nothing of Bentham in making his profession of utilitarian opinion, though he refers to James Mill without naming him. The sentence,

[1] *Id.* p. 375.

[2] *Id.* p. 377.

[3] Called William Henry Smith in his memoir (1889). He seems never to have practised as a barrister; and he declined a Chair of Philosophy. He was the author of some unsuccessful poetic tragedies; but achieved a success of esteem with his *Thorndale* 1857) and *Gravenhurst* (1862).

"When we speak of *natural rights* and *natural justice* we intend to mark out a species of conduct which, prior to all attempts at jurisprudence, would have been enforced by a common resentment,"[1] indicates how he may have diverged from Bentham. Smith's treatise is a curious combination of an entirely naturalistic theory of the growth of moral feeling through the pressures and conditions of social life, and a formal acceptance of revelation.[2] The latter is never allowed to interfere with the former. At the outset there is posited "that ethical theory which, while it asserts the universality and extreme importance of the moral sentiment, denies to it that character of a mental intuition by some writers so earnestly contended for, and, submitting the sentiment to analysis, traces its origin to social influences, to the control which in every community man exerts over man." At that stage, twenty years before the ORIGIN OF SPECIES, there was, of course, no debate over the inheritance of acquired characters. What might have been looked for from such a thinker was a reference to Gay's hypothesis of the social extension of moral judgments by association of ideas; but from that doctrine in general, as put by James Mill, Smith had decided to keep the ethical question apart. He would probably have accepted the general view that moral evolution proceeds by culture influences, with some cumulative inheritance on the side of structure. "Society," he writes, "is something more than the combination of man for their common benefit; it is the building up, the developing, the creating of the individual man."[3] And again: "It is society which *individualizes*—which makes us of value to ourselves."[4] Both the permanency of fundamental moral principles and the variations in general practice, he claims, "are with ease accounted for by the social origin here ascribed to the moral sentiment."[5] Here the reference to fundamentals suggests a recognition of an intuitive basis; but that is not finally conceded. "We have all of us far more to learn in the regulating and determining our moral judgments than, according to the hypothesis of an intuitive sentiment, we might have expected. We are spared no labour by this mysterious guide, and saved from no error."[6] And we have the very important argument that the outbreaks of licence historically noted in times of great danger, which threaten the break-up of society, are proof of the social origin as well as of the conditioning of moral feeling.[7] The same inference is naturally drawn from the laxity of international morals; it is due to the slightness of the inter-social relation, whereas

[1] Work cited, pp. 33–4. [2] *Id.* p. 73. [3] *Id.* p. 24.
[4] *Id.* p. 26. [5] *Id.* p. 28. [6] *Id.* p. 37. [7] *Id.* p. 36.

an intuitive and à priori ethic would suffer no such differentiation.[1] An interesting comment on the degree of admiration excited by the character of Satan in PARADISE LOST[2] supports the same thesis.

Smith is thus very clearly in the scientific line of ethical thought. On the free-will question he repeatedly and rightly insists that the alleged sense of freedom of the will "cannot possibly be a simple truth of the consciousness."[3] On the other hand, while he is one of the first to put the proposition that the power behind the universe is 'unknowable,'[4] he is careful to pay many tributes to religion. It might thus have been expected that his short treatise, which exhibits something of the literary power recognized in his later books, would have attracted considerable attention in his day; but it did not. Ferrier gave it a high encomium, but Mill and Spencer never mention it; Darwin, whom it would have helped and stimulated, does not cite it either; and the later defenders of intuitionism show no knowledge of it. It would appear that Bentham's influence and the drift of events had for the time transferred interest in the origins of morals to the ever-enlarging debate over the problems of social, legal, and political reform.

That debate, as we have seen, had been fully posited by the long upheaval of the French Revolution. Such works as Godwin's POLITICAL JUSTICE and Mary Wollstonecraft's VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN, and such burning humanitarianism as pervades the whole didactic poetry of Shelley, had in England forced ethical thought to face and develop critically the issues raised in action by the Revolution after having been ethically broached by Helvétius and rhetorically debated by Rousseau. Roughly speaking, the main problems of morals had been first effectively posited in the latter half of the seventeenth century by Hobbes and Spinoza, Hobbes proceeding on the concrete problem of politics. They had been discursively handled in the eighteenth century, for a long time without regard to the central concrete problem, which was broached anew in France, and then in England, in the concretely and constructively applied utilitarianism of Bentham; while Kant, in Germany, equally roused by Hume, framed a new à priori doctrine, designed to fill the place of the now decaying system of theological morals.

Thus were posited for the nineteenth century the main bases of its ethical debate, political and philosophical motives combining to elicit all the issues. The distinctly new task of the nineteenth

[1] *Id.* p. 30. [2] *Id.* pp. 39–41. [3] *Id.* pp. 49, 50. [4] *Id.* p. 85.

century was to apply to ethics as to biology and sociology the principle of evolution indicated by the Scottish thinkers Ferguson and Hutton, and in France by Condorcet. The contribution of William Smith was to apply that conception on specifically ethical lines before it had been mastered on the biological side through the research of Darwin and on the sociological side through anthropology. It is thus to be recognized as a substantially original performance.

§ 4. *J. S. Mill.*

Mill's moral philosophy is mainly to be gathered from two writings—his masterly criticism of Whewell (1852) and his more constructive, but much less coherent, essay on UTILITARIANISM, written in 1854, revised in 1860, published in a magazine in 1861, and in book form thereafter. With all these opportunities of revision, it remains in many respects an unsatisfactory treatise; while the simpler task of confuting the dogmatism and exposing the disingenuousness of Whewell, then the English protagonist of intuitionism, is so well executed that the balance of prestige soon turned to Mill's side. Whewell's method, alike in his ELEMENTS OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY (1845) and in his LECTURES (1838–62), is, as Mill remarked, to apply constantly to his own side such epithets as 'high' and 'independent,' and to assume that the other side have no such sentiments as those of 'duty' and 'rectitude' at all. All this is traversed at the outset:—

> "Dr. Whewell is assuming to himself what belongs quite as rightfully to his antagonists. We are as much for conscience, duty, rectitude, as Dr. Whewell. The terms, and all the feelings connected with them, are as much part of the ethics of utility as of that of intuition. The point in dispute is, What acts are the proper objects of those feelings; whether we ought to take the feelings as we find them, as accident or design has made them, or whether the tendency of actions to promote happiness affords a test to which the feelings of morality should conform."

And so with Whewell's announcement "that 'we must do what is right, at whatever cost of pain and loss.' As if that was not everybody's opinion; as if it was not the very meaning of the word right. The matter in debate is, what *is* right, not whether what is right ought to be done." Upon this follows a severe disparagement of Paley, who is left to Whewell's tender mercies, and a vigorous defence of Bentham, as the builder of a system of "secondary or middle principles, capable of serving as premises for a body of ethical doctrines not derived from existing principles, but *fitted to be their test.*" To the old objection, suicidally stressed by Whewell, that we

cannot calculate all the consequences of any action, Mill replies that this is no more a bar to utilitarian ethics than to any form of activity outside of morals.[1] (It is, in fact, the most pressing reason for framing an ethical system that is 'higher' and more 'independent' than the adherence to tradition and prejudice, intuition and dogma.) All along the line the defence is decisive; and Whewell is finally shown to be in reality a Hobbist in his own teaching, in so far as he has any criterion of conduct, and only escapes conviction as such by formally abandoning his Hobbism and leaving no non-utilitarian criterion at all. The final reduction of Whewell's position to the last of three vicious circles is skilful: "We wanted to know what morality is, and Dr. Whewell said that it is conforming to rights. We ask how he knows that there are rights, and he answers, Because otherwise there could be no morality."[2] This is Socratically effective; but an independent analysis of the 'sense of right' might have made the victory more definitive. As it is, Whewell is shown clearly enough to be ultimately dependent for most of his moral rules on utility, and to reach a "Benthamism even approaching to Fourierism."[3] And Mill easily shows that the "universal voice of mankind," claimed by Whewell as decisive in morals, is "universal only in its discordance."[4]

Pointing out, further, that Whewell and the other intuitionists are "none of them frankly and consistently intuitive"; that, "to use a happy expression of Bentham in a different case, they draw from a double fountain—utility and internal conviction—the tendencies of actions and the feelings with which mankind regard them," Mill insists that "Utility, as a standard, is capable of being carried out singly and consistently; a moralist can deduce from it his whole system of ethics without calling to his assistance any foreign principle."[5] Here, it will be observed, he in effect cancels his earlier criticism of Bentham, which he seems to have in large part forgotten. The intuitional elements which he had blamed Bentham for not exploiting he now simply discards. Unfortunately, when he proceeds later in his UTILITARIANISM to formulate his own doctrine substantively, he forgets in turn his formal rejection of those elements, and, instead of giving the necessary elucidation that intuitional elements are the driving power which the utility test is required to control, he merely posits both as if he were propounding the utility test only.

This is the great logical flaw in Mill's ethical treatise. In the

[1] As a commercial speculation, or the boring of a tunnel.
[2] P. 490. [3] P. 495. [4] P. 498. [5] P. 497.

critique on Whewell he had rightly insisted that men's 'feelings' are no more necessarily right than their 'opinions.' "The antipathies of mankind are mostly derived from three sources. One of these is an impression, true or false, of utility." It behoved him, then, to recognize expressly that the individual sentiment of utility varies, and that the general problem of utilitarianism is to treat all proclivities as expressions of individual preferences, and ascertain how far they are to be overruled by a test of social or general utility. Had he circumspectly done this, his central position would have been unassailable. What he does in the second chapter of the UTILITARIANISM, however, is to oscillate between ideals of personal preference considered as such, and the thesis that "actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness." The test of happiness is merged in a test of worthiness which presupposes an intuitional standard; and the psychology of happiness is confused past remedy. We get the following series of wholly disparate dicta:—

1. "Pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends; and.....all desirable things are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain."

2. "It would be absurd that, while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone."

3. If of two pleasures one is, "by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality so far outweighing quantity as to render it in comparison of small account."

The context here explains that those who can equally appreciate both give a marked preference to the activities which "employ their higher faculties." They would not be fools or knaves "even though they should be persuaded that the fool, the dunce, or the rascal is better satisfied with his lot than they are with theirs." Here we have ostensibly a direct and formal contradiction of the preliminary position. If the conduct of either fool or knave promotes happiness, it is by the definition relatively right; and 'better satisfied' must be held to mean 'happier.' And the contradiction is gratuitous. For the wise man to wish to be a fool is by definition impossible, and the problem is frivolous. Mill proceeds

to explain that the 'superior being' does *not* sacrifice happiness, and that he who affirms the contrary "confounds the two very different ideas of happiness and content." The criticism is itself another gratuitous confusion. Freedom from pain = content; and freedom from pain has been bracketed with pleasure as 'desirable end.' The new debate about content and pleasure is but another divagation from the ethical issue, yielding us only bad psychology. After being expressly told that men "competently acquainted" with high and low pleasures always prefer the former, we are as expressly told that "men often, from infirmity of character, make their election for the near good, *though they know it to be the less valuable.*" This all-confusing proposition is backed by the explanation that "capacity for the nobler feelings is in most natures a very tender plant, easily killed.....by mere want of sustenance." Mill never reaches the plainly right summary, which is, here, that a man's preferences vary with internal and external conditions. That being so, the ethical question is: How is the utility test of right and wrong thereby affected? Are the varying conditions of happiness to be the determinants, so that an action which is 'right' in one psychic state is 'wrong' in another? And to that the plain answer is that we must distinguish once for all between (*a*) pleas or propaganda for ideals considered as preferences and (*b*) the question of what is right or wrong in the moral relation.

What Mill has done is to revert to his irrelevant anti-Benthamism, and to mix up the direct ethical issue, which is that of reciprocal standards, with that of personal ideals or (primarily) self-regarding standards. That becomes an ethical issue only when it is ultimately brought to the test of utility. For instance, A is devoted to scientific research, 'scorning [other] delights, to live laborious days'; B is equally devoted to art, content to paint on a pittance; C, liking pictures, but determined to have wealth, turns A's scientific researches to commercial account, and uses his wealth variously for his own enjoyment, which includes the buying of B's pictures. What has ethics to say concerning the three legally-lived lives? Strictly speaking, nothing, save in so far as it posits a doctrine of social justice, which is soon reduced to a question of social expediency. Each man, in the terms of the case, is 'pleasing himself.' The comparison of their ideals is not an ethical question until we raise the problem how and how far the conduct of each promotes or hinders the happiness of others. Some zealots tell us that if the artist does not paint with an eye to the good of society he is so far non-moral. To that the answer is (1) that he is very

much more likely to produce pictures which will give pleasure to cultured taste if he paints from sheer joy in art, and that to paint bad pictures with a high social purpose is to do good service to nobody; (2) that the man of science is just as truly pleasing himself as is the artist; and (3) that the art-loving man of business who grows rich is in the same case.

Incidentally we raise the question whether the artist who paints pictures which please a multitude but awake contempt in those 'competently acquainted' with art is to be cherished on moral grounds as promoting the happiness of the greatest number. At once we see that 'greatest happiness' raises a problem which is merely confused by Mill's formula of 'quantity' and 'quality.' Quantity may mean either intensity or duration; Bentham recognized both measures, though he could never reduce them to anything like exactitude; and Mill's terms are really verbal confusions. 'Quality' raises the issue of comparison between men, not merely between one man's potentialities. If I care above all things to see a prize-fight, it is nothing to the ethical purpose to tell me that other men greatly prefer going to a concert, and that I might bring myself to enjoy the concert if I cultured myself appropriately and assiduously. Being, in the terms of the case, a delighted devotee of pugilism,[1] I neither can nor will admit that I can or ought to expel my devotion—even if I chance to admire both Bach and boxing, which is not an impossible combination.

Mill now tells us that those who have remained equally susceptible of higher and lower pleasures *probably*[2] never "knowingly and calmly preferred the lower"; and that "from this verdict of the only competent judges.....there can be no appeal," the more so "since there is no other tribunal to be referred to even on the question of quantity." While we are wondering what this signifies to ethics, he seemingly proceeds to admit, in a scandalously confused paragraph,[3] that that is not the question; and we reach the position that the end for which things are desirable, whether for ourselves or for others, "is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyments, both in point of quantity and quality"—the test on those heads being "the preference felt by those who, in their opportunities of experience, to which must be added their habits of self-consciousness and self-observation, *are*

[1] An expert recently wrote, Apropos of a prize-fight in which the defeated man was very 'game,' that the 'prospects' of the ring are now 'brighter' than they have been for years. His zest was radiant and indismissible.

[2] "It may be questioned whether—" are his words.

[3] That beginning: "I have dwelt on this point," p. 16 of the large-type ed.

best furnished with the means of comparison. This, being, according to the utilitarian opinion, the end of human action, is necessarily also the standard of morality."

A critical reader might here not unjustifiably refuse to carry further a discussion in which the protagonist's case is in a state of mere vertigo. We are definitely told that the utility test can be properly applied only by certain experts. For the selection of those experts there is and obviously can be no direction. Mill has merely collapsed to the most negligible of the positions of Aristotle—that *phronimos*, the sage, is finally the judge of what is right and wrong. If this does not mean that *phronimos* is to decree without arguing, it means in this connection nothing; and if that is what it does mean, *solvuntur tabulæ:* 'the palaver is at an end.' If anything could justify a thoughtful man in rejecting Utilitarianism in the lump, it would be the logical chaos in which Mill has thus involved his argument at the outset.

When he proceeds to argue as to what constitutes happiness the confusion becomes only more trying. After the express monition that we must not identify content with happiness, we get this new series of internecine axioms:—

1. The happiness conceived by philosophers of the happiness school is "not a life of rapture but moments of such in an existence made up of few and transitory pains, many and various pleasures, with a decided predominance of the active over the passive, and having as the foundation of the whole [*sic*] not to expect more from life than it is capable of bestowing. A life thus composed, to those who have been *fortunate enough to obtain it*, has always appeared worthy of the name of happiness."

2. "Great numbers of mankind have been *satisfied* with *much less*. The main constituents of a satisfied life appear to be two, either of which by itself is often found sufficient for the purpose: tranquillity and excitement. *With much tranquillity many find that they can be content with very little pleasure:* with much excitement, many can reconcile themselves to a considerable quantity of pain."

3. "It is only those in whom the need of excitement is a disease that feel the tranquillity which follows excitement dull and insipid, instead of *pleasurable in direct proportion to the excitement which preceded it.*"[1]

It would be hard to match such persistent self-contradiction in one paragraph from any previous philosophic work. When, a

[1] Ed. cited, p. 21.

little later, we get to the dictum that "unquestionably it is possible to do without happiness: it is done involuntarily by nineteen-twentieths of mankind,"[1] we are entitled to pronounce the vertigo incurable, and to put aside the whole of this part of Mill's work as a ruin.

Very naturally, orthodox criticism has not only impeached it but has assumed to dismiss thereby the utilitarian view of ethics as exploded. Mill, like Bentham[2] and Hobbes, had written very severely of the English universities. In them, he declared, "no thought can find place except that which can reconcile itself with orthodoxy."[3] It was perfectly true; but the challenge meant that many of the academics who acquiesced in the servitude would take their revenge on the challenger. The more lamentable was the heedlessness with which, in the face of such hostility, he laid out his own ethical positions. The result has been that all that is sound in his ethical work is put out of sight by critical exposures of his confusions.

We are not, however, driven to a choice between the futilities of Mill and the futilities of Whewell. In his remaining chapters, while he never fully indicates what intuitional judgments are, he puts effectively the practical case against intuitionist absolutism. Two rational propositions are indicated even in the chapter of confusions—that poverty may conceivably be eliminated (Mill greatly exaggerates here the facility of the process), and that standards of happiness may be raised by extension of culture. Here, indeed, we are badly entangled in the circle of argument on content *versus* happiness, content in discontent, satisfaction in non-happiness, and all the rest of it. But the twofold task of promoting the general intellectual life and bettering the average economic life is sufficiently posited as the utilitarian concept; and the impossibility of any but a utilitarian criterion as between conflicting ideals is further on made clear. Here, however, he is met by an academic criticism which invites notice. One of Mill's opening propositions is that, since each person's happiness is a good to him, "the general happiness therefore is a good to the aggregate of all persons." Upon this Mill is charged with a 'fallacy of composition,' in that he has "forgotten that neither the pleasures nor the persons are capable of being made into an aggregate....." The aggregate of all

[1] P. 22.

[2] Who wrote: "The University of Oxford, for this century and half, has been, and at the time of writing is, a commonwealth of perjurers" (*The Rationale of Reward*, Works, ii, 260).

[3] Critique on Whewell, as cited, p. 451.

persons' is nobody, and consequently nothing can be a good to him [*sic*]. A good must be a good for somebody."[1] Yet not only does the critic on the next page treat "the greatest pleasure of the aggregate of sentient beings" as a quite valid conception, but in another work he affirms that

> "The idea that has vitality now is rather [than individualism] that of humanity as an organic whole—the idea that *the mere individual is an abstraction*, and that his life has meaning only in so far as he shares in a larger life than his own."[2]

The purpose here is to discredit Bentham and Spencer as against Hegel. For that purpose the concept of 'a good for somebody' is not only not necessary, it must be cancelled; the 'aggregate' that was 'nobody' becomes an 'organic whole'; and the individual who, for the discrediting of Mill, alone was real, becomes 'an abstraction.' This far outgoes even the self-contradiction of Mill.

Clearing up the anti-Mill logomachy as we do that of Mill, we recognize (1) not that even any one society (to say nothing of 'humanity') is, save by loose analogy, an 'organic whole'[3] (Spencer uses the much better term 'super-organic'), but that communities are as such partially organized aggregates, in which the good of each individual does actually depend largely on that of the aggregate or average; (2) that they are capable of collective action for the good of their members in general; and (3) that it is becoming more and more generally an accepted truth that it is the 'duty' of the members individually to seek the good of all, envisaged as the good of the community. The utilitarian teaching is, in sum, that they will promote their own good when they promote that of others, and that this is both motive and sanction. The 'common good,' truly, is an abstraction; but it is one of the abstractions that facilitate action by focussing ideas; and of such abstractions there are more than would be easy to count. In any case, we may summarily dismiss a criticism which alternately establishes and disestablishes aggregates and individuals as entities, for the purposes of ethical partisanship.

The rational conception of applied utilitarianism is to be reached by bringing together Mill's UTILITARIANISM, his POLITICAL ECONOMY, and his LIBERTY. The last-named work showed, what intuitionists had mostly either taken for granted or angrily denied,

[1] Prof. J. S. Mackenzie, *Manual*, p. 104.
[2] *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, 1890, p. 124.
[3] M. Renouvier put the matter clearly enough fifty years ago. *Science de la Morale*, 1869, vol. i, ch. 26.

according as they were populist or authoritarian, that liberty in the political sense is really useful all round, tried by the tests alike of mental and economic productivity, ostensible well-being, and State-duration. On the other hand, the regimen of political liberty is obviously attended thus far by drawbacks, recognized by most men or by some as concrete evils, most of which it has in common with despotisms; and for those who recognize the general interdependence of well-being it becomes a specifically moral task to reform and reconstruct the social system so as to maximize the good and minimize the evil. Broadly speaking, that is the sum or upshot of theoretic ethic, of what we term ethical science, as distinguished from the art of betterment. We reach it as a result of the survey of all past ethic—theocratic, theistic, authoritarian, intuitionist, Stoic, Epicurean; whether by way of studying the psychic bases of ethical judgments, their evolution, or their æsthetic justification as personal ideals, as claims of justice, or as claims of benevolence.

All of these factors have forced themselves on our attention. It has been perfectly clear that while a sense of utility, whether sound or illusory, has always been in some degree bound up with moral judgments since man became capable of reflection, acquired and communicated or inculcated approvals are often held without conscious calculation of utility. As to that there need be no debate. The true vindication of utilitarianism is as a test of the validity of intuitions; and even in regard to those which pass unchallenged among 'all honest men,' as the phrase goes, the test is always worth applying, in the light of the principle of determinism. The liar is contemned or loathed in the ratio of the seriousness of his lying; the cheater is ostracized or punished; the coward is despised. No test can leave these judgments otherwise than *relatively* right; but the acceptance of the test of utility and the law of causation go a long way to modify our action on the judgment, eliciting compassion in place of contempt for the coward, and even, as Butler urged, for the positive wrongdoer, who is to be diagnosed as morally malformed. It was the utilitarian test, as we saw, that led to the substitution of other than capital penalties for a multitude of offences formerly treated as deserving death.

As for the problems of social regulation outside the area of penal law, every year of human experience goes to show more clearly for those who will reflect that what are called 'new intuitions' of duty can claim moral validity only as they bear the utilitarian test. As a rule, they actually claim its sanction: he is a feeble Socialist who

cannot see that his doctrine of social justice is arbitrary until he can show it to be socially expedient, a principle of civilization and not of disintegration.

That the forecast of all conduct is difficult we can now see to be merely a restatement of the fact of the immanence of evil in life. If the way to happiness for each and all were clear, there would be no ethical problem. To plead the difficulty as a reason for holding by any set of quasi-intuitions is seen on scrutiny to be worse than fallacious: it is intellectually dishonest. On the lines of à priori morality the world could never have made a step in moral civilization; man, but for the perpetual displacement of 'intuition,' would have been still in the stage of cannibalism, blood feud, human sacrifice, slavery, polygamy, and internecine inter-tribal war; and no one of the religions which are now founded on as codes of right would have been allowed to come into existence. Only the frequent perversity and thoughtlessness of innovating doctrine could keep in countenance the pretence to veto moral innovation by formulas claiming to be at once 'libertarian' (as to free-will) and authoritarian, positing blank intuition and 'conscience' as against doctrines palpably proceeding on those very grounds. It is probably just to say that the less a would-be reformer is able to see the difficulties of the course he proposes, the less is he a reformer.

Leaving for more detailed recognition the multiplicity and complexity of the difficulties facing all large programmes of social reform which challenge accepted standards of justice, we have to note so far that we get rid of no difficulty by saying with Mill that "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." If this meant "better for the other human beings that A should be" what is posited, and Socrates likewise, there would be no room for dispute. But the meaning is that one is à priori 'better' than the other; and this is strictly meaningless, albeit it is likely to lead to a denial of the rights of the alleged fool. When Mill proceeds to argue that, "if the fool or the pig [!] is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question; *the other party to the comparison knows both sides*," he has committed himself to what he elsewhere calls a falsism. Socrates no more knows the satisfied fool's state of mind than the fool knows his, to say nothing of the pig (who, if one may judge from observation, is generally as dissatisfied an animal as any, and with good reason). The crux which Mill was here evading is this, that on the happiness principle men must be allowed to choose their own happiness, under control

only of the principle that they must not infringe upon the happiness of others. In other words, all men seek *self-realization*, self-fulfilment; and the thorough-going utilitarianism which is at once 'reciprocitarian' and politically 'libertarian,' recognizing the social utility of content as well as of discontent, will have to recognize the title to freedom of a great many proclivities which a great many people of different proclivities regard with disapproval.

Not that the utilitarian is bound on his own principle to find it his duty to promote all men's pleasures indiscriminately, as some critics of the principle seem to suppose. It is with the utility test as with the Golden Rule: always it is subject to delimitation. Not only *must* the pleasure be first delimited by the test of reciprocity—the necessity of not infringing on the licit pleasure of others—but the calculator of utilities is bound to discriminate between licit pleasures, for others as for himself. His first practical problem is to realize how far he must admit the legitimacy of pleasures from which he is personally averse. Having drawn his line with the utmost tolerance, however, he is under no rational obligation to shape his course so as to further pleasures which, though licit, are in his view less conducive to good life than others. And, save by bare definitions taken apart from their context, Mill certainly gives no countenance to the strange assumption that by making happiness the co-efficient of utility the utilitarian commits himself to seeing equal 'rightness' in coarse and in refined pleasures. On the contrary, he seems at times, as we have seen, to lay down a doctrine of moral *expertise*, according to which an ideal of preferences in pleasure is to be laid down by a few rarely qualified persons. Either this is a mere statement that the matter cannot usefully be debated, in which case its mode of introduction is enigmatic, or it is a demand for an impossible authoritarian standard of conduct. The human race is not within calculable distance of becoming one of moral experts in Mill's sense. His obtrusion of the expert is either a formal irrelevance or a negation of his own effective criticism, in the LIBERTY, of the doctrine of the benevolent despot; and the former is the preferable view. The LIBERTY, like all his books, is at points seriously unscientific; but it is his most characteristic contribution to practical or applied ethics, and, written as it was after the other, may fairly be regarded as the more mature. The chapter (iv) "Of the Limits to the Authority of Society over the Individual" will probably be regarded in the future as of more importance than its author's exposition of utilitarianism in general.

It indicates, at least, the practical problem of ethics; and in

facing it we see our way to a right statement of the issues. Instead of dividing actions merely into right and wrong, we must begin by classing them as licit and illicit; while in both of those classes we must recognize grades, over which, especially as regards the former, there will go on a continuous dispute. The problem of ethics, abstractly speaking, has really been always the same for men. They can agree to a large extent as to what is licit; they can agree to but a small extent as to what is 'best.' Much of their ethical progress has consisted in recognizing that some concepts of 'best' must be waived for purposes of definition of the licit; that some things once held to be 'worst' must be allowed within its area; and that, on the other hand, some things once reckoned as good and even 'best' must be made illicit. Heresy has had to be permitted; human sacrifice and slavery to be banned. Progress will continue to involve the same kind of readjustments. Things once reckoned indifferent come under dispute as being socially noxious; things vetoed by law or convention come to be viewed as properly to be tolerated. Thus the problem of utility is always being re-shaped through the unceasing application of the two principles:—(1) The utmost freedom of self-fulfilment compatible with general or average well-being; (2) The constant criticism of forms of self-fulfilment in terms of the same test. And on both heads alike it is to the test of utility that the discussion must always come. Law is to be regulated by it when notions of justice balance; personal ideals of perfection must appeal to it when they seek to persuade.

That is the gist of the utilitarian doctrine, when sifted. It denies neither the fact that ideals of perfection vary spontaneously nor the fact that adjudication between them is difficult alike for the individual reshaping his licit course and for the society called upon to reshape its code and collective practice. In effect, all schools are more or less utilitarian, since even the least reasonable intuitionists or authoritarians recognize in the welfare of mankind as a whole a measure or test of rightness of conduct; and the theologians who still posit future rewards and punishments are there utilitarian by profession. On the other hand, the logical utilitarian not only admits but posits an à priori motive in his very concern for utility, as well as in his recognition of varying moral bias. The theoretic strife in ethics is thus soluble in an evolutionary statement. It is in the practical evolution, the attempt to regulate or reconcile the variations of bias, that the cause of strife will continue to subsist. And the only possible arbitrator, as aforesaid, is the criterion of utility, however variously conditioned by bias.

Chapter IX

KANT AND LATER GERMAN ETHICS

§ 1. *Kant.*

If Bentham definitely marks a new era of humanistic ethics, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) no less clearly marks the modern reaction. Wholly reactionary, indeed, Kant's ethic is not, and Kant's purpose could not be. It is, however, one of the paradoxes of religious history that the thinker whose first pre-eminent performance is a logical rebuttal of all the received philosophic grounds for believing in a God should have secured his later vogue by putting in philosophic form another, previously regarded as indeed popular, but not philosophic at all. This is not the place for a detailed inquiry into Kant's inner evolution; but it may be worth noting that the history of his philosophic output after the Critique of Pure Reason (1781) would fit into the notion that, after showing theistic philosophy to be no better founded than popular religion, he took alarm at the possible effect of such a demonstration on conduct in general, and proceeded to rebuild religious faith of a kind in another fashion. If this be not the explanation of his course, he must be held to have resorted to the old device, used by Catholics against Protestantism, and by Pascal against Rationalism, of employing scepticism to repel rational philosophy in order to reinstate a more or less unreasoning belief. Such a purpose seems to be avowed in the preface to the second edition of the Critique (1787):—

> "I cannot make the assumption, necessary to the practical use of my reason, of God, Freedom, and Immortality, if I do not at the same time take away[1] from the speculative reason its pretension to a transcendent insight.....I must uproot knowledge, to make way for belief."

That process he supposed himself to accomplish in the Critique of Practical Reason (1788) and other works, though to the end he was visibly an unbeliever in revelation, prayer, worship, miracles, and the Christian creed. As regards ethics, he undertook to carry his point in his Foundation of the Metaphysic of Ethics

[1] *Benehmen*, in antithesis to the previous *annehmen*, 'assume.'

(1785), the PRACTICAL REASON, and other works; and while he always claimed special merit for his system in that it was critical, whereas that previously prevailing was dogmatic, he is as a moralist strictly dogmatic, beginning in dogma and ending in it. On this ground, very naturally, he has been in large measure accepted by religious moralists as their typical thinker.

It is not that there is any novel conception in Kant's ethic, apart from his importation into it of his dogma of an unknown world of Things-in-themselves. In his LOGIK, edited for him in 1800 when he was past work, he affirms that "in moral philosophy we have got no further than the ancients"; and it has been observed that there is little in Kant that is not in the British moralists who preceded him, "though his general attitude toward ethics is a different and more distinguished one."[1] But he developed an à priori doctrine of morals with the thoroughness of method which (as distinguished from thoroughness of solution) marks his work in general; and his influence has been proportionate.

Criticism of his doctrine begins with the opening of his FOUNDATION OF THE METAPHYSIC OF ETHICS: "There is absolutely nothing thinkable in the world, or even outside of the world, which can without qualification be reckoned good, except a *good will.*" It is explained that intelligence, judgment, etc., are good and desirable, but may all be turned to bad ends if they are not directed by a good will or *character;*

> "and so the good will would seem[2] to be the indispensable condition even of worthiness to be happy.....The good will is not so through what it does or achieves, not through its ability to attain any foreplanned end, but only through willing (*durch das Wollen*); that is to say, it is good in itself, and for its own sake to be prized incomparably higher than anything which through it can ever be produced for the satisfaction of any inclination, or, if you will, of the sum of all inclinations. Even if [for any reason] this will entirely lacked power to fulfil its object; if from its greatest striving nothing resulted, and there remained only the good will (*not, of course, as a mere wish, but as the use of all means so far as they are in our power*), it would still shine as a jewel for itself, as something that has its whole value in itself."

The incoherence of the proposition[3] is as remarkable as its

[1] Selby-Bigge, Introd. to his *British Moralists*, i, p. xxxvi.
[2] Here one translator, Semple, interposes "reason being judge," which is not in the original.
[3] This is even accentuated in the translation in Prof. J. Watson's *Selections from Kant* (which is abridged but accurate), but is in effect disguised in the translation of Semple, who is broadly untrustworthy in all of his renderings of works of Kant.

emptiness. The 'value'—to whom, is never hinted—of the good will lies in itself, not in anything it achieves, and is unaltered even if it never achieve anything; yet to be a good will it must use all the means within its reach. Then why? To *prove* that it is good? But no mere use of means can prove *that* if nothing results; and if results are unnecessary to the proof, why is resort to means necessary? And since results are no part or proof of the goodness of the good will, what *is* a good will? In the course of the exposition we are led to understand that it is a will-to-do what the reason pronounces to be good. A cultivated reason, indeed, is found, we are told, to be further and further from happiness and the joy of life the more it seeks them. Reason then cannot guide the will so as to obtain satisfaction for all our needs—an "implanted instinct" would (!) have done that better: "at the same time, however, reason is given us as a practical faculty (*Vermogen*)—that is, as something which shall have an influence on the will; so its true vocation must be *to produce* a will *not as a means to any other end but as good in itself.*" Then, if it is the function of reason to *produce* a will good in itself, a 'good reason' must be at least as absolutely good a thing as a good will; and the opening proposition is doubly convicted of nullity. Null it was in any case. The explanation that a *good* will is absolutely good while *judgment* may be turned to a bad end is a plain paralogism. We have but to reply that a *good* judgment, a *good* reason, is absolutely good, since, *ex definitione*, the reason determines the goodness of the will. To ask further whether joy in another's goodness is not absolutely good is hardly worth while.

There is something astonishing, something intellectually humiliating, in the utter emptiness of the dogma with which Kant thus begins the 'foundation' of his so-called metaphysic of ethics, and which has been so devoutly accepted by so many disciples. It is a mere evasion of the whole problem of the criteria of good and bad by a verbal begging of the question, for the dogma is without definition, and 'good' is posited without an indication of its meaning; simply because the philosopher knows that any definition will involve an open resort to experience. The task he has set himself is to frame an ethic which shall take the place of the 'law of God' in virtue of being somehow equally imperious. The ethic of utility, the ethic of reciprocity, says in effect: 'Do thus *if* you would be just, *if* you desire your own happiness and that of your neighbour.' It is a *conditional* imperative, since there is no use in announcing any other when we go beyond the prescriptions of law. But Kant

is determined to maintain the semblance of Sinai, and he calls the moral imperative categorical—that is, unconditional—as if he thought to scare the egoist with a word. And all the while he knows that the word is vain; for he avows that perhaps nobody has ever fulfilled the moral law. Seeking an ethic of edification, he turns science and logic out of doors.

> There is a sense in which 'categorical imperative' may at first seem to have a valid meaning: that is, as the command of our moral judgment to ourselves. We say: 'I positively *must* do what I feel to be right; I *must not* disobey my conscience.' But the purely self-regarding aspect of 'conscience' cannot rationally be taken as the meaning of Kant's phrase. The moralist must be conceived, when laying down a moral law for all, to affirm that it is to be promulgated as such. And the sense of 'must' is not at all confined to the conscience which reaches its law by Kant's process of reasoning; it is all-powerful in the case of a savage obeying a taboo or a tribal veto on marriage within a specified name-category. The mere sense of *must*, then, cannot be the significance of the phrase.

Let us see exactly what Kant teaches, not incidentally or casually, but systematically and continuously throughout his FOUNDATION (*Grundlegung*) and his CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON:—

> "1. Either the desire for happiness must be the motive (*Bewegursache*) to maxims of virtue, or the maxims of virtue must be the effective cause of happiness.
>
> "2. The first is *wholly impossible*, because (as has been before shown) maxims which place the determining motive (*Bestimmungsgrund*) of the will in the desire for its happiness *are not moral at all*, and cannot be a ground of any virtue.
>
> "3. The second is also impossible [*i.e.* in the known world of space and time].....No necessary connection between happiness and virtue, amounting to the highest good, can be expected in this world from the most scrupulous observance of moral laws.[1]
>
> "4. But while the first alternative is absolutely false, the second is false, not absolutely, but only insofar as Virtue is regarded as a form of causality in the world of experience (*Sinnenwelt*); that is to say, only *conditionally* [false], inasmuch as I assume such existence to be the only kind of existence of the rational being.
>
> "5. Since, however, not only can I think of myself as a Noumenon in an idea-world [*als Noumenon in einer Verstandeswelt*—that is, as a thing-in-itself, in a world of things-in-

[1] *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, Theil I, bk. ii, ch. ii, sect. i (*Antinomie der prakt Vern.*).

themselves, which Kant has elsewhere shown to be *wholly unknown and absolutely unknowable to us*] but I possess in the moral law a purely intellectual determinant of my causality in the world of experience, it is *not* impossible that a moral disposition (*Sittlichkeit der Gesinnung*) may have, if not immediately yet mediately (through an intelligible Upholder of Nature), a really necessary connection, as cause, with happiness, as effect, in the world of experience.

"Yet, though happiness might thus be an effect of virtue in a world of sense, the connection of virtue and happiness in a system of nature which is merely an object of the senses cannot be other than contingent, and therefore cannot be established in the way required in the conception of the highest good."[1]

And this dovetails with the argument about free-will which is developed in the FOUNDATION. The known world, Kant expressly admits, is wholly a process of causation; it cannot be otherwise contemplated in thought. But for Kant's purpose we must "ascribe to every rational being the idea of freedom, under which alone it [the being] acts."[2] No proof for this assertion is offered; and when we reply that we do *not* act under the idea of 'freedom' in any of our judgments or preferences, having no conception of *unfreedom* in any of them, no Kantian rebuttal is possible. Kant in fact goes on to say

(1) that "while a thing in the world of experience is subject to certain laws, a thing or being *in itself* [*i.e.* in the hypothetical unknowable world behind] is independent"[3]; and (2) that "Freedom is a mere idea, of which the objective reality cannot be made out (*dargethan*) in any way according to natural laws, and therefore not in any possible experience; and which therefore, since it cannot be presented under any analogy, cannot in any way be conceived or comprehended. It holds (*gilt*) merely as a necessary presupposition of reason in a being who believes himself to be conscious of a will—that is, of a faculty distinct from mere faculty of desire; in other words, can control himself as an intelligence, therefore according to the laws of reason."[4]

And the conclusion of the treatise is that

"We do not at all comprehend the practical unconditioned necessity of the moral imperative, *but we comprehend its*

[1] *Id. ib.* sec. 2 (*Kritische Aufhebung der Antinomie*). As Kant is often falsely simplified, I have given the 'solution' in close translation, save as regards the last sentence put in inverted commas, which is Professor Watson's careful and helpful paraphrase of Kant's clause running thus: "welche Verbindung in einer Natur, die blos Objekt der Sinne ist, niemals anders als zufällig stattfinden und zum höchsten Gute nicht zulangen kann."

[2] *Grundlegung*, Pt. iii, sec. 2. Also sec. 5. (*Von der dussersten Grenze aller praktischen Philosophie.*)

[3] *Id.* section last cited. (Ed. Kirchmann, p. 87.)

[4] *Id.* p. 89.

incomprehensibility, which is all that can reasonably be demanded of a philosophy that seeks its principles within the bounds of human reason."[1]

We see now where we stand. Kant's free-will is the meaningless freedom of a wholly hypothetical will, out of space and out of time. His 'highest good' or 'necessary connection' between virtue and happiness occurs only out of space and out of time—that is, not in a Heaven, as ever ostensibly conceived, but in that admittedly unknowable and unthinkable world of Things-in-themselves. And his ethic, first and last, is an ethic for an unknown world. This we have seen as regards the theory, and it is also so as regards practice, though here Kant tries to stand at once in both worlds, and to posit an ethic of means to ends while professedly repudiating such a conception as wholly non-moral. His practical doctrine turns on the famous maxim that we must always and only act so that we can will that our rule or maxim of action shall be followed by all others. If, for instance, a man makes it a rule to seek revenge for every injury, he yet cannot will that every one else should do so,[2] for (Kant does not add the reason, but there is no other) that would mean that other men would always be taking revenge on each other and on him. When he pays his debts he *can* will that everybody shall follow his course or rule. Now, this is plainly an explanation of moral law in terms of utility; and in other passages, as Schopenhauer pointed out, Kant explicitly grounds his maxim on self-interest.

As soon as he would explain by illustrations how a maxim or rule of action can be known to be such as we can will to have every one follow, he of necessity surrenders either the à priori pretence or the pretence to reject all self-interest. I must not, he says, knowingly make a false promise, because I cannot will that every one should do the same; and I cannot will it *because* such a practice would recoil on myself. Similarly, even the rich and well-placed man cannot refuse to help any one in distress, because if that practice were followed by all he himself might one day suffer through the heartlessness of others.[3] If we let pass the pretence that this is known à priori, independently of all experience, we are absolutely bound to note that the ground for action given is à priori self-regard. And there is no other way of being able to represent to oneself how the Kantian rule of action can ever be made concrete. The reason 'independent of experience' has first to note the

[1] Or, as Prof. Watson translates, "which seeks to reach the principles which determine the limits of human reason." The passage will not construe.
[2] This illustration is given in the *Practical Reason*, bk. i, ch. i, § 1, Anm.
[3] *Grundlegung*, 2 Abschn. pp. 45–47, ed. Kirchmann.

experience of social life, and then to apply the test either of individual or social utility, or of both. For why should not the revengeful man, for instance, be willing that every one should act on his rule? The savage takes it for granted that every one does! If the reasoning man recognizes that his rule is not one which he can wish to be universally followed, it must be because he sees either the danger to himself or the danger to society. And if he consciously regards his payment of his debts as a line of action and motive which he can wish all to copy, it must be because he sees it to be useful all round.

Here we shall be told, as long ago by Butler, that the just man does not think of utility at all: he feels that it is just for all to pay their debts. Then does he not also feel that revenge is just? Many of his just ancestors certainly did. How came *that* à priori conviction ever to be modified save by an experience which evolved another conviction? Kant's concept of a reasoned maxim independent of all experience is a pure chimera—one of the nullities which cumber the ground of philosophy. As Hume saw before Kant, a reasoner without experience is unthinkable; and in the case of personal conduct the pretence that the reasoning can be carried out *without reference* to experience is demonstrably false. Why is the inane proposition imposed? Simply because Kant was proceeding always on a presupposition—the cherished Stoic dogma that virtue is incompatible with any consideration of interests. He might well say that in moral philosophy we have got no further than the ancients: *he* had not. The whole inquiry of his predecessors as to the genesis of morality was thrown away upon him: for other purposes he could make an anthropological research; in this connection he would not. It is in his case that we see clearly the vital importance to ethics of a recognition that morality has *grown up* in man as an evolution from certain roots, which *could not* yield any such à priori notion as Kant insists on positing as the first step in morality, unless we so describe the intuition of self-interest, which he will not admit to have anything moral in it.

No man illustrates more clearly than Kant the element of truth in Professor Bradley's humorous saying[1] that metaphysics consists in finding bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct. After his great emergence from 'dogmatic slumber' upon the impulsion of Hume,[2] his intense analytic effort is mainly a process of buttressing

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, pref. near end.
[2] *Vorrede* to the *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik*. Ed. Kirchmann, 1876, pp. 6–7.

his presuppositions, theistic and moral, by a semblance of critical reasoning which is not truly critical. In the end his position is essentially that which was given him by Rousseau—that religion subsists in the region of feeling. He re-baptizes feeling as the practical reason, even as he substitutes his unthinkable 'intelligible[1] world' of Things-in-themselves for the orthodox Heaven (leaving Hell disestablished), and his 'categorical imperative' for 'Thus saith the Lord.' No one better justifies Comte's summary verdict that metaphysics had been made a mere apparatus in substitution for theology, because no one laboured more intensely to create an absolutist metaphysic after seeing the nullity of all metaphysical theology. And there is in Kant a spirit of philosophic candour which chronically resumes possession of him, as when he confesses the truth of the assertion that no act was ever done from a pure sense of duty.[2] That is to say, to the motive of sheer sense of duty there is always added either that of shame in the contrary course or that of *inclination* to the course of alleged duty. Such candid avowals secure him the credit of special philosophical rectitude.

And yet he would not apply the truth which he recognized. As his theoretic moral course must be taken neither for individual nor any other satisfaction,[3] he must have it that the right action, to be truly moral, must be *unwillingly* done: Duty is "a necessitation to an *unwillingly* accepted end."[4] It now follows that the vaunted 'good will,' the one absolutely good thing in the universe or outside it, is a will that *unwillingly* does what is right. And here we have the crowning and ruining absurdity of the Kantian ethic, that the will which *willingly* does the right thing (now declared to be the seeking of "one's own *perfection* and others' *happiness*"[5]) is not acting morally at all, because it finds pleasure in its action! To this complexion comes the ethic which denies that in any action taken on the motive avowedly actuating all ordinary action there can be any morality. The very concept of 'perfection' has now become meaningless. If the word means anything, it must be the state in which the whole inner life is harmonious. But if the harmony amounts to finding pleasure in seeking other people's happiness, it is barred! To satisfy Kant's Stoic fanaticism we

[1] Kant's 'intelligible' is by his own showing the unintelligible—the unthinkable.

[2] *Grundlegung*, Abschn. ii.

[3] Not even for *intellectual* satisfaction—this Kant bars as emphatically as any other. *Kritik der prak. Vern.* Thiel I. bk. i, ch. i, Anm. 3.

[4] *Metaphysik der Sitten* (*i.e.* not the *Grundlegung*), Th. II, *Einleitung zur Tugendlehre*, iv. This treatise raises the question whether Kant in his ethics did not in writing one book forget part of what he had said before.

[5] Last cit.

must never be happy except by some uncomprehended fortuity. To find joy in beneficence is to be non-moral.

It naturally follows that Kant's two practical 'maxims' are found on analysis to have no application to life, either his own or another's. If even the simple rule of reciprocity (which Kant disparaged[1] because it involved a recognition of self-interest) be subject to necessary restrictions, how much more so must be that of Kant: "So act that you may will that all should act on your principle." At the first glance, the 'so act' must be reduced to 'so act in direct regard to the claims of others': it is not for any one else to write Kant's works, or for more than a few to devote themselves to the life of the study. But even when thus limited, the precept is made chimerical by universality. Kant's own life could certainly not bear the test. For twenty-five years he lived in the same town with his two sisters without ever speaking to them, not because they had done anything wrong, but because they were uncultured.[2] If he could will that *that* course of action should be adopted by all, he was simply willing that all should do what he did *because it satisfied him to do it.* It would then be strictly just to say of him what he so wantonly said of those who maintained an ethic of utility, that he "ruined all morality."

Of course, despite that and other astonishing displays of lack of human feeling,[3] Kant had to recognize at some point that, inasmuch as even his non-experiential ethic posited the claims of others, those others must be allowed to have their own notion of happiness. Our duty, then, is to seek "our own *perfection*, but the *happiness* [not the perfection] of others."[4] Since, however, happiness, sought for or experienced in right action, is for Kant non-moral, we are thus confronted with the moral duty of making other people non-morally happy, while taking care not to be so ourselves.

At this point, naturally, the argument from à priori duty makes a tolerably complete submission to self-love, in the act of disowning it. Beneficence to others (not out of affection to them) is a duty

[1] "The trivial *quod tibi non vis fieri*, etc." he calls it (*Grundlegung*, footnote to Abschnitt ii; ed. Kirchmann, p. 55), citing the 'negative' form.

[2] Stuckenberg, *Life of Immanuel Kant*, 1882, pp. 182-83. There seems to be no dispute on this point. It was admitted by Wasianski (*Id.* p. 459, note 79), who speaks very highly of Kant's amenity (*Id.* p. 194), as against others who found him overbearing (*Id.* p. 141).

[3] "After the decease of acquaintances he preferred not to converse about them; but when they were mentioned he would say 'Let the dead rest with the dead,' or 'It is all over'" (Stuckenberg, p. 195). This might conceivably arise out of strength of sorrow; but that does not at all appear to have been the fact. We can conceive how orthodoxy would have commented if such things could have been recorded of Hume, whom, by the account of the cleric Dr. Alexander Carlyle, an orthodox acquaintance brutishly (but to Dr. Carlyle's entire satisfaction) chided for weeping at his mother's death, explaining that his sorrow was due to his unbelief!

[4] *Metaph. der Sitten*, Th. II (*Met. Anfangsgr. der Tugendlehre*), Einleitung, § 4.

because, since our self-love involves the need to be loved by others, thus making ourselves an *end* to *them*, we must universalize the duty so as to make it a moral maxim. It is my duty, then, to sacrifice a part of my welfare to others *without hope of compensation* (this after the need for a return of beneficence has been given as the ground of the duty!); and no limits can be assigned to the process. It will depend! "For the sacrifice of our own happiness and our own needs to others, in order to promote theirs, *would be a self-contradictory maxim if raised to a universal law. Therefore* this duty is only a general (*weite*) one; it has latitude (*Spielraum*) to do more or less without having distinct limits set to it. The law holds good only for the maxims, not for their definite applications."[1]

The one thing clear about this characteristic involution is that a duty of sheer sacrifice is alleged, only to be left absolutely indeterminate, on the express ground that sheer sacrifice is not to be expected! Thus is secured the precious *form* of Stoic disregard of self-interest. It is not surprising, then, that there is finally no more practical content in Kant's second à priori maxim than in his first. The second, which is dubiously put as a 'practical imperative,' runs:—

> Act so that you use humanity, as well in your person as in that of any other, always as an end [in itself], never merely as a means.[2]

This is in itself quite a good re-statement of the law of reciprocity in an ideal form; but as a rule of ordinary conduct it really meant no more for Kant than for the average employer of labour. When his servant became too troublesome he dismissed him, after many years of service. The truth is that inasmuch as men buy services their individual 'duty' is necessarily limited to paying for them.[3] It is as members of the State that they may fitly be called upon to re-shape the laws so that every other member shall be treated as an end in himself to the extent of giving him some education. But that was not what Kant was proposing. He was deducing an ostensibly à priori moral rule from the datum that every rational being is an end in himself, and must regard others as on the same footing. But, for the man who does not in himself recognize such an extension of the law of reciprocity, the 'supreme principle of duty' which Kant professed to lay down is not supreme at all. Each egoist is an end in himself *for* himself, and for himself only.

[1] *Id.* § 8, ii.
[2] *Grundlegung*, Abschnitt ii; ed. Kirchmann, p. 53.
[3] Succour to the sick and the starving is of course generally felt as a primary duty; but that too is necessarily handed over in general to the State.

As a matter of fact, systems of national education have never been set up on Kant's principle, but always, broadly speaking, on utilitarian motives. Men in mass have recognized the *advantage* of national education, and the disadvantage of popular ignorance.

Besides, as each is an end in himself for *him*self, and Kant's own application of his principle is that we shall seek the *happiness* of others as viewed by them, the practical application of his rule might as well be 'Bread and the circus' as national education. If the majority demand only food and amusement, and we have no further rule of action than the recognition of their right to the happiness they want, provision of food and amusement could on Kantian grounds be viewed as the sufficient fulfilment of both the ostensibly à priori and the practical maxim. The provision of national education is a dictate of the utility principle which Kant would not recognize as 'moral' at all. So that the 'high priori' ethic could yield social stagnation and popular ignorance, while the 'low' alone might yield civilization.

That Kant's ethic had an actual moral influence for good it would not be warrantable to deny; but certain it is that such an influence is not in the ratio of the crude sense of moral superiority set up by Kant's language in himself and in his disciples. There is not only nothing to show that the Kantian ethic ever withheld men from the grossest *collective* egoism as against other groups: there is plenty of ground for believing that in the World War German Kantians held themselves to be acting on Kant's maxims when they bludgeoned Belgium and committed systematic outrage on temporarily conquered non-combatants. The Nemesis of the ethic which professes to be independent of all experience is that it can be held independently of all practice. Not that Kant *redivivus* could be easily conceived as joining the Euckens and Harnacks in claiming that German *Kultur* was a sufficient vindication of German aggression. But Kant had compliments for Frederick on the score of his law of free speech, and no clear censure of him as an aggressor.

On two issues of practical ethics, however, Kant challenges definite criticism: in the one case as to his doctrine; in the other as to his deliberate practice. In terms of his doctrine that moral rules must derive always from an à priori principle and must never be deflected by considerations of utility, he seriously argued that one must not lie even to save life.[1] Put the case of one who sees another flying in evident fear, and then a third in furious pursuit,

[1] Article *Ueber ein vermeintes Recht aus Menschenliebe zu lügen*, 1797.

holding an axe. If the man with the axe asks the spectator which way the fugitive has gone, the spectator must on no account give a false direction: he must either tell the truth or (even at the risk of his own life) say nothing. Sophistically resorting to a utilitarian argument even when repudiating the utility principle, Kant contends that, supposing by chance the fugitive had changed his course after passing out of sight, a false answer to the would-be murderer might really put him on the fugitive's track and lead to the latter's death; in which case, he hardily affirms, the guilt would lie on the man who had lied. Obviously, if guilt *could* accrue to the latter in that case, it would accrue to him in the former. The whole doctrine is a striking illustration of the perversity with which an à priori ethic can be applied. It could easily happen that the would-be slayer should put the question: 'Did a man run past you in *that* direction?'; and if the spectator remained silent the pursuer would at once infer 'Yes.' To avert a murder, the sane citizen would *at once intuitively and rationally* decide to give a false answer; and he would do rightly. If the fugitive should chance to change his course, with a fatal result, no guilt would lie with the spectator; he had done his best; and the deliberate judgment of almost any rational moralist would now endorse the decision he took on the spur of the moment.

Kant would doggedly retort that the action done on a utilitarian motive had 'no moral value'; and we in turn are compelled to retort with the question: 'Moral value to whom?' The whole debate is involved in that use of the word 'value,' which Kant throughout puts quite dogmatically, never asking what it means or saying what he means. If he meant 'moral value to *me*,' the thesis ends in a non-moral egoism. If 'moral value to God,' the debate is equally at a stand. If 'moral value for society,' it is for the Kantian to explain how he can affirm a *value* 'to society' without applying a utilitarian test. The proposition is in short a mere begging of the question, first and last.

But, with all his uncompromising theoretical professions, Kant actually did, in a matter of high public importance, flagrantly flout his own rule of absolute veracity where probably no considerate moralist of his own or any other school would now without hesitation defend him. In his treatise on RELIGION WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF MERE REASON, published in 1793, he expressly advises that pastors who do not believe in the inspiration of the Bible, or in the truth of miraculous narratives which are devoutly believed by their congregations, should nevertheless go on using the Bible in

the usual way, because it is a good means of edification.[1] Not only is the à priori rule here abandoned on a utilitarian pretext; the utilitarian test is applied in a quite inconsiderate fashion, no thought being given to the contingent inutilities—the possible demoralization of the pastors; the tainting of their own moral standards; the probable unhappiness resulting; the stultification of their very purpose insofar as outsiders could know and reveal their insincerity; the social disservice of withholding enlightenment which, in the terms of the case, the enlightened pastor must hold to be of intellectual value; and so on. Hume has incurred severe reprobation for counselling a youth to take orders without faith; and in that case, certainly, the absence of economic need leaves Hume quite unjustified; but Kant had, by his own vehement declaration, no right to take any account of the economic needs of the pastors to whom he gave his counsel.

On any view, it is distinctly awkward for the 'independent' ethic that its chief modern champion should, as had been so often done by the ecclesiastical champions of absolute morals, abandon it and resort to a highly questionable use of the utilitarian test on so vital a matter as that of the ethics of propaganda. The claim to superior rectitude is fatally discounted, once for all. It is not, as a matter of fact, the utilitarians who have put veracity in peril, either by theory or by practice.

> Kant incurred immediate vehement protest from Jacobi for his fanatical doctrines that the 'good will' must do its good unwillingly, that joyful benevolence is non-moral because self-pleasing, and that we must not lie even on an altruistic motive. Schiller made the point effectively enough in ironically exaggerative verses;[2] but the prose of Jacobi is more memorable than the lines of the poet. It was to Fichte that he wrote: "Yes, I am the Atheist, the Godless one who, in spite of the will that wills nothing, am ready to lie as the dying Desdemona lied; to lie and deceive like Pylades when he pretended to be Orestes; to murder like Timoleon; to break law and oath like Epamniondas, like John de Witt; to commit suicide with Otto, and sacrilege with David—yea, to rub the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, merely because I am hungry, and because *the law is made for the sake of man and not man for the sake of the law.*"[3] Perhaps we may leave the matter at that, with a mild demurrer to the account of Timoleon as a murderer, and to the somewhat uncalculating zeal of the theist for the utilitarian

[1] *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, 1793, pp. 108 *sq.*; 145-46, 188-89, 221. Baur and Stuckenberg both dwell on the doctrine.
[2] *Die Philosophen*, end.
[3] See the whole passage in Prof. Mackenzie's *Manual of Ethics*, second ed. pp. 62-63.

principle. The cases of Epaminondas and John de Witt call for more reflection than he gave to them. We to-day must remember the 'scrap of paper.'

The 'categorical imperative,' though still propounded to ethical students as philosophical truth, has been so often dismissed by independent thinkers that we may fairly say of it what has been inaccurately said by Professor Mackenzie of Bentham. It was disputed from the first; Schopenhauer, even while acclaiming the transcendental theory of personality, pulverized the ethic in his essay on THE BASIS OF MORALITY (1837); and in 1822 Beneke dismissed the 'categorical imperative' as "a psychological fiction."[1] Dean Mansel, a strong Kantian as regarded the CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON, emphatically condemned the à priori ethic of the Master as "an inconsistency scarcely to be paralleled in the history of philosophy."[2] Mill in his UTILITARIANISM remarked that the fundamental maxim could theoretically be applied with the result of an action generally *im*moral (that is, by the ordinary universal standards of morality); and Sidgwick points out[3] that it "would seem to render the construction of a scientific code of morality futile, as the very object of such a code is to supply a standard for rectifying men's divergent opinions." Professor Riehl, systematically maintaining the determinism of the will, points out that Kant "makes the practical [*i.e.* the 'thing-in-itself'] ego a thing, though he recognized that this hypostasis of a theoretical ego is nothing but a dream of metaphysics."[4] And Franz Brentano, rejecting the 'categorical imperative' as a "palpable fiction," observes that "to-day no one able to judge is any longer in doubt concerning it."[5] Professor T. C. Hall, in turn, sums up that Kant, while rightly rejecting any "final authority outside ourselves as capable of giving content to the moral life," failed "to draw the inevitable conclusion that the content must ever be a relatively correct interpretation of human experience"; also that he "failed to catch the genetic point of view already on the horizon."[6]

And yet Professor Mackenzie, while partly recognizing the ruin of the Kantian doctrine, keeps the 'categorical imperative' in the forefront of his MANUAL OF ETHICS; and Eucken, at the centenary of Kant's death in 1904, affirmed that he had "made the supremacy of morality *scientifically* secure."[7]

The discussion of Kant's ethic arouses with a special urgency the question so often suggested by ethical systems: What is it all *for*?

[1] Cited by Brentano, *Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, Eng. tr. 1902, p. 45.
[2] Bampton Lectures on *The Limits of Religious Thought*, Lect. vii. Cp. Mansel's *Metaphysics*, 2nd ed. 1866, pp. 368–69, 377.
[3] *Methods of Ethics*, 3rd ed. pp. 207–208.
[4] *Introd. to the Theory of Science and Metaphysics*, Eng. trans. 1894, p. 213.
[5] As cited, pp. 10, 45.
[6] *History of Ethics*, p. 579.
[7] *Collected Essays*, Eng. trans. 1914, p. 185.

Why do we systematically discuss ethics at all? Is it in the hope of making the world better; or is it in order to secure a spiritual intoxication of self-esteem, in the manner of the Stoics, who had no hope of making the world better? Kant certainly had strong social aspirations. He hailed the French Revolution; and he was slow to turn away from it. He strove to plan to some extent for Perpetual Peace; and he sketched a cosmopolitan theory of polities. What, then, were his practical expectations? In the PERPETUAL PEACE he suggests that the wood of which humanity is made may after all be too crooked to yield any fair figure. Is that humanity, then, to be transformed by putting to it the doctrine of a categorical imperative, professedly deduced in disregard of all experience, and independently of every consideration of individual happiness? When he speaks of '*mere* happiness' in the conventional fashion of the intuitionist, is it with the expectation of persuading humanity in the mass to put the quest of happiness aside?

That Kant had a non-historical mind is admitted by admirers; and that deficiency may be part of the explanation of his dogmatic attitude and method on a problem so profoundly rooted in history. Had he asked himself, How would the promoters of the Crusades, of the Inquisition, of the Thirty Years' War, have met the challenge of his fundamental maxim, he must have answered either (*a*) that they would have declared themselves to be as willing that all men should act on their principle as he could be that men should act on those which he followed, whether in his life or in his works; or (*b*) that they could not realize the meaning of his challenge at all. He can hardly be supposed to have believed that it would have moved them to abandon their projects. It certainly would not. The Euckens who acclaimed him as the saviour of morality a century after his death had no misgiving about their loyalty to the maxim in 1914. We are driven, then, to put the question: Would the 'maximist' (if the term be for the moment permitted) rather have the present-day world, adorned with a sprinkling of his tribe, than a world in which men abstained from war and cruelty on the avowed ground that they desired to 'maximize happiness' (in the accepted sense of those terms)?

We are not at all entitled to say that either Kant or the Kantians generally would not answer 'Yes.' Many, probably, would say, in the old fashion, that the quest of happiness (which they would prefer to call pleasure) is a demoralizing motive; others would reply with Kant and the early anti-utilitarians that we never can foresee how we shall get happiness for ourselves, and therefore

cannot foreplan how it is to be procured for mankind; this though Kant schemed for Perpetual Peace, and avowed that happiness will always be man's quest. And the absolutists might very well say that, though Kant completely stultified his own doctrine of the absolute disinterestedness of virtue, they refuse there to follow him. It may suffice, then, to sum up that unless the sense of utility—which is an intuition like another, and, like all others, needs guidance—does pervade the moral world as it pervades the industrial, there will be no 'security' for morals in the sense of a safeguarding of mankind from new World Wars. Kantians and Hegelians, pietists and pantheists, will be willing to wage such wars in the future as in the past. And those who are now beginning to ask what is the total reaction of a great war upon society may see reason to doubt whether morality in all its aspects will not have a better chance with civilization plus the utilitarian temper than without either.

§ 2. *Fichte.*

It will probably not be claimed by any Fichtean (if there are still any[1]) that his philosophy puts any decisively new aspect on ethics. It is described by an admirer as "pre-eminently a philosophy of the free-will";[2] and though that must not be understood in the ordinary force of the terms, it so far holds that Fichte's ethical reasonings start with a 'reason' and a 'free will' which undergo no psychological analysis. The objection that the term 'free' is *irrelevant* to judgment can no more be met in Fichte's than in Kant's system; and in Fichte's it is never glimpsed. Further, as Fichte's total philosophy is pantheistic,[3] it is so far irrelevant to all ethic. Systems which profess to explain the Cosmos in terms of a universal spirit merely cancel the problem of evil which moral philosophy is called upon to face, and which cosmic philosophies as such profess to face. Theism solves it amorally; pantheism not at all. Fichte certainly had intense ethical feelings, and many interesting ethical ideas; and his pantheism was so far involved in the former that he exasperated his academic colleagues at Berlin, whom he always sought to overrule, by declaring that it was not to him but to the Idea speaking through him that they were listening.[4] But this only made clearer the crudity of the Fichtean ethic.

[1] "It may well be doubted if there are at present half-a-dozen students of his works." Adamson, *Fichte*, 1881, p. 2.

[2] Prof. W. T. Harris, in pref. to trans. of *The Science of Rights*, 1889.

[3] "Spinoza in terms of Kant" is the late Professor Adamson's authoritative summary of it. *Fichte*, p. 130.

[4] Solger, cited by Adamson, p. 99. Fichte is here revealed as a very undisciplined personality, intensely zealous for discipline. "For the smallest faults he treats the students as though they were imps of hell."

On Kant's lines Fichte reached a doctrine of rights and a doctrine of duties; and his SYSTEM OF MORAL SCIENCE,[1] which is later and riper than the explosive FOUNDATION OF NATURAL RIGHT,[2] follows up a long procedure of abstraction, which would commonly be called metaphysics,[3] with deductions as to some forms of conduct. Like Kant, Fichte insists that "a lie is never to be spoken, even to save a life"; and he restates the dilemma of the would-be slayer and the hunted man in such a way as deliberately to obscure the problem. He is anxious to asperse the man who, however loth to lie even to a law-breaker, would do so to save another's life; and the ethical emptiness of the position is revealed by Fichte as by Kant in attempts to show that the hunted man *may* not be killed if the truth is revealed, or that he may be saved by simple silence. Both moralists evade the plain consideration that non-reply to a given form of question would be assent; and both weakly shirk the logical outcome of their doctrine, which is that, no matter whether the pursued man *can* be saved, the questioned man must rather let him be killed than deceive the pursuer. Fichte shuffles into the pretence that if we lie in such a case it is to save our own skin.[4]

Still more interesting is Fichte's way of dealing with the problem of religious propaganda by non-believing clerics, over which Kant stumbled. On his deductive method, without even a glance at utilities, he reaches the conviction that there must be a "reciprocity amongst all rational beings for the purpose of producing common practical conviction," adding: "Such a reciprocity, *which each one is bound to enter, is called a Church*, an ethical commonwealth; and that about which they all agree is called their symbol" [*i.e.* their creed or Confession]. "But the symbol must, unless the Church community is to be utterly fruitless, be *constantly changed.*"[5] On the other hand, as the Church cannot be a universal debating club, the Ego, being "a tool of the moral law," must not repugn the creed of the church within the church, however he may disbelieve it. The unbelieving pastor then will be acting quite morally so long as he regards the professed creed as a means of 'raising' his flock 'to his conviction.' What he must do to bring about a change in the official creed is to address himself to "the learned public, or

[1] *Das System der Sittenlehre* (1798), trans. as *The Science of Ethics*, by A. E. Kroeger, 1896.
[2] *Grundlage des Naturrechts* (1796), trans. as *The Science of Rights*, by the same, 1888.
[3] Adamson, however, averred (p. 112, *note*) that "neither in Kant nor in Fichte is there anything in the slightest degree resembling what is commonly called metaphysics." This can hardly have been Fichte's own view.
[4] *The Science of Ethics* (Eng. trans. of *System der Sittenlehre*), p. 304 *sq.*
[5] *Id.* p. 248.

scholars."[1] How the creed is actually to undergo the required constant changes is far from clear. It might seem to be implied that the scholars will do the chronic re-drafting, and that the unlearned flock will silently assent; but Fichte is not particular on such points of procedure. Broadly speaking, he was as willing as Kant that the pastors should act a deception about their beliefs, though they must not 'lie to a lunatic,' as Bentham would say.

Fichte's ablest English expositor[2] has stated that—

> "The guiding principle of all Carlyle's ethical work is the principle of Fichte's speculation that the world of experience is but the appearance or vesture of the divine idea or life; that in this divine life lie the springs of *true* poetry, of *true* science, and of *true* religion; and that he only has *true* life whose spirit is interpenetrated with the realities transcending empirical facts, who is willing *to resign his own personality* in the service of humanity....."

It seems hard on Fichte to saddle him with Carlyle,[3] whose pantheism becomes dualism at every contact with evil. Fichte disdained the doctrine of the devil. But ultimately his philosophy is as self-stultifying in regard to evil as is that of Carlyle. The very specification of *true* poetry, science, and so forth, is either the avowal that the *untrue* cannot be accounted for or the mere voluble evasion of the very problem undertaken.[4] It is to Fichte's credit that, however he might rage against the extremely ill-conditioned German students of his day, he seems to have been the first eminent thinker to argue that the object of rational criminal treatment is neither retribution nor example, but the simple protection of society.[5] But on the political side Fichte, who at the centenary of his birth was acclaimed in Germany rather as patriot than as philosopher, sowed seeds which, if they bore any fruit, can hardly have fructified for good. In his lectures on THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRESENT AGE he described it as "the age of completed sinfulness."[6] When, two years later, he delivered his celebrated ADDRESSES TO THE GERMAN NATION, he crudely vaunted the moral and mental superiority of his people as a means of stirring them to patriotic activity—mental, not military. They were to "found an empire of mind and reason." But in 1800 he had produced his treatise on THE CLOSED INDUSTRIAL STATE, in which, vending the grossest

[1] *Id.* pp. 254–61.
[2] Adamson, as cited, p. 79.
[3] It is much to be doubted whether Carlyle studied Fichte's *philosophy* at all. He read very little philosophy proper; but he doubtless read Fichte's *Characteristics*.
[4] It is an astonishing fact that so able a thinker as Adamson should have indicated no perception of this crux.
[5] *Science of Ethics*, p. 295.
[6] *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*, 1806, p. 34.

errors in economics, he propounded as the national ideal a State ruled on the lines of the modern Socialist ideal as to property, but strictly self-contained, and having absolutely no trade with any other. Before *this* outcome of the philosophy of 'universal spirit,' Adamson was constrained to avow that the treatise "is the best illustration of his total neglect of experience and want of power to bring his abstract notions into connection with concrete historical reality."[1] When the same competent eulogist adds that "His treatment of empirical science, of æsthetics, and of history in the widest sense, is essentially abstract and barren,"[2] it is hardly necessary to dwell on the corollary as to his ethics. Fichte's dream of the 'Closed Industrial State' is, among other things, the negation of international ethics.

§ 3. *Hegel.*

It is justly claimed for Hegel that he at times grasps at the reality of things in a way that neither Kant nor Fichte does; and this holds of his ethics. But it remains true that he grounds on or grows out of Kant and Fichte, and that his whole effort suffers in consequence, especially on the side of terminology. Like Fichte, he sets out with the concept of 'freedom'; but it soon becomes clear that for him the word has a meaning special to his mind, and entirely detached from its every-day senses. The ordinary polemist on the question, starting from the issue first set up by Christian theology, uses the term freedom, as we have seen, irrelevantly. A term which applies to actions, and which at once posits the antithesis of free and unfree actions, is thoughtlessly applied to the whole life of judgment, and is there predicated universally of *every* process of judgment as such, for it is obvious that the argument for free-*will* must hold good of all opinion if of any. Here, then, a term which has its very meaning as one of an antithesis is applied where no antithesis is recognized or admitted; and the word, ceasing to be descriptive or discriminative, becomes in the strict sense a 'shibboleth' —an 'abracadabra'—to debate over which is to be formally inane. Free-will, in short, is strictly a meaningless term.

> [Those thinkers who have sought to give the term a foothold of meaning by arguing that some acts of will (= choice = judgment) are free and others not, concede the nullity of the ordinary use of the word. They fail, however, to make any valid discrimination between free and unfree acts of judgment. Dr. Shadworth Hodgson, in effect, falls back on the concept of

[1] *Fichte*, p. 78. [2] *Id.* p. 218.

coerced *action*; and M. Bergson's suggestion that will is free *at certain moments*, as when the mind attains to a new perception, is in effect merely a dialectic effort to elude the category of causation. I *seem* to see a new truth without any process of reasoning which yields it. But this is a psychological phenomenon which holds in every case where there has been difficulty of comprehension of a *taught* doctrine (*e.g.* in mathematics), and where the comprehension at last comes suddenly.]

Hegel's whole doctrine of 'freedom' is strictly unintelligible, unless the word be often understood as meaning 'self-expression.'[1] When he refers to the old debate on free-will and determinism he at once decides on the determinist side.[2] As he puts it, the free-willers stood for a 'freedom of caprice' to which he denies the quality. "To take caprice as freedom," he observes, "may fairly be termed a delusion"; and he even declares that "Freedom in every philosophy of reflection, whether it be the Kantian or the Friesian, which is the Kantian superficialized, is nothing more than this formal self-activity." But this does not exactly make Hegel a determinist in our sense. His frequently explicit pantheism, like that of Fichte, makes the 'true' or 'good' the expression of the 'divine,' the self-expression of 'universal spirit'; but, like all European pantheists, he cancels his pantheism when he comes to evil. "When I will the rational," he says, "I do not act as a particular individual, but according to the conception of ethical observance in general.....The rational is the highway on which every one travels."[3] So that when I will the unethical I will the irrational. Is not that, then, also the expression of universal 'spirit'?

When he attempts illustration he offers a concrete untruth :—

> "When a great artist finishes a work we say: 'It must be so.' The particularity of the artist has wholly disappeared, and the work shows no mannerism. Phidias has no mannerism: the statue itself lives and moves."

This is the verdict of technical ignorance. For Praxiteles and for lesser sculptors Phidias *has* a mannerism. The greatest artist inevitably has. Shakespeare, it is true, visibly transcends the mannerisms of his predecessors, and thus is relatively unmannered; but any competent student can learn to detect his manner, which is simply a subtler and finer mannerism.[4]

[1] Often, indeed, he may use the word in other senses. Professor Dyde's 'Index of Words' at the end of his translation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is very instructive as showing how German philosophy has played fast and loose with terms. But in Hegel's use of the term as regards will, the essential and prevailing meaning is as above stated.

[2] *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Dyde's trans. 1896, p. 25 *sq.* [3] *Id.* p. 26.

[4] It is technically defensible to distinguish manner from mannerism; but for Hegel's philosophic purpose it is not.

Applying the test of Hegel's æsthetic to his ethic, we find that he assumes an absolute in conduct, a line of action which is 'all right' because every rational being (here we have Kant) will take the same view. That also is historically untrue; and in the false absolutism we have the germ of Hegel's absolute ethic of the State—*and of the application of it to politics by later Germany*. A pantheist who can say, and whose disciples can repeat, without shame, that "God does not want narrow-hearted souls or empty heads for his children,"[1] thus making 'universal spirit' merely Ormuzd as against Ahriman—a god of the sheep who excommunicates the goats—such a pantheist can hardly yield us a humanist ethic worthy of the name. And Hegel does not. Strictly speaking, he does not really unify his thought any more than do his predecessors. Making his first concern a cosmosophy, a philosophy of the All, he dogmatically simplifies that by positing the All as in a state of evolution and calling the force of change Spirit, realizing itself in Reason = Action. But Spirit remains for him a duality in each of the two special aspects of his problem—God and man, and right and wrong. Vehemently he affirms a universal Providence; and unscrupulously he charges upon those who reject that conception that they crave for themselves "the convenience of wandering at will by their own ideas.....One is thereby dispensed from giving his knowledge a relation to the divine and true."[2] What he was himself doing was merely to posit verbally a divine and true in terms of *his* own ideas, and to pretend to be obeying an outside standard when he had framed it. Still he seeks for his position a dogmatic sanction by asserting that "in the Christian religion God has revealed himself—that is to say, he has given man to know what he (God) is, so that he is no more a hidden mystery. With this possibility of knowing God, there is laid on us the duty thereto." And then follows the explosion about God wanting no narrow-hearted and empty-headed children—the gross bluster of one who, in the name of philosophy, would browbeat criticism.

Thus emerges a still further disintegration of the idea of universal Spirit; to the dichotomy of God and man there is added that of the Christian revelation and Reason; and all the while Hegel does not accept the Christian revelation which he uses as a shield. Instead of following that, he professes to seek "a Theodicée, a vindication of the ways of God," a concrete historical presentation in rivalry with the abstract schema of Leibnitz, "so that, the evil in the world

[1] *Philosophie der Geschichte*, 2te Aufl. 1840, Einleitung, p. 19. [2] *Id.* p. 19.

being comprehended, the thinking Spirit may be reconciled with the evil."[1] But there is never any comprehension. Evil, in Hegel's cosmos, is no more theistically or pantheistically comprehended or accounted for as such than in the Jewish or Christian. It is there; it is denounced; it is alternately treated as Spirit and not-Spirit, Reason and Unreason; and, in effect, it is disposed of as *non-ens*. Such a philosophy, *as* such, excludes ethics; the philosopher's ethic must be at bottom a utilitarianism which he cannot avow; and of this there is plenty in Hegel, who was a great deal of a practical politician, finding quasi-philosophic reasons for what he wanted to see done.

Like Kant and Fichte, he seems to have found a compulsion towards moral incoherence in the situation created for German university teachers by the fact that a multitude of students, all looking forward to the pastorate as a means of livelihood, were, like their teachers, unbelievers in the Christian creed—for such were Kant, Fichte, and Hegel alike. Hegel seems in one place partly to challenge Kant, when he writes that "A great mind has publicly raised the question whether it be permitted to deceive a people," and gives an ambiguous answer.[2] But he himself was always framing an official compromise.

> "The Christian doctrine that man is by nature evil," he writes,[3] "is better than the opposite, that he is naturally good, and is to be interpreted philosophically in this way. *Man as spirit is a free being, who need not give way to impulse.* HENCE, in his direct and unformed [*i.e.* barbaric] condition, man is *in a situation in which he ought not to be, and he must free himself. This is the meaning of the doctrine of original sin, without which Christianity would not be the doctrine of freedom.*"[4]

It is hardly possible, in a serious spirit, to outgo this in the way of transformation of the Christian creed; and the best we can do for Hegel is to note that he simply dismissed the apparatus of a future state of rewards and punishments as a machinery for moralizing mankind. Taking this position, he is consistent in rejecting Feuerbach's theory that the penalty attached to a crime is a necessary menace, and that when the crime is committed the threat must be fulfilled.[5] Hegel's answer, however, couched in the question, "Is it right to make threats?" is an evasion of the issue.

[1] *Id.* p. 20.
[2] *Philosophy of Right*, § 317.
[3] This is one of the posthumous 'additions' to the *Philosophy of Right* made from students' notes. Such book-making is unsatisfactory; but the additions are undisputed.
[4] *Id.* § 18, *Add.*
[5] *Id.* § 99, *Add.*

The real issue would be: "Is it right to promulgate penalties?" and to meet that by saying, as Hegel does, that "A menace may incite a man to rebellion in order that he may demonstrate his freedom," is to stultify his own gospel of the State and the law. The right solution is Fichte's, that society has the inherent right to protect itself; and this is missed by Feuerbach and Hegel alike—by Hegel because he is determined to work out a solution in terms of his abstraction of 'freedom' = self-expression. The result is the fantastic proposition that "the injury which the criminal experiences is inherently just because it expresses his own inherent will, is a visible proof of his freedom and is his right."[1] Such propositions are among the many proofs that Hegel's philosophy is an expression of *his* self-will rather than of a concern to reach truth in terms of human life. And this unethical element in some degree pervades all the German philosophic systems, from Kant to Schopenhauer. Hegel sees well enough that the restraint of crime, called 'punishment' or 'retribution,' should *not* be revenge; but what he works out is only a formula in which the act of retribution is declared not to be revenge. "Justice does not revenge, but punishes,"[2] is his characteristic fashion of cutting the knot. The law must somehow be made to figure not as a human act for a human end, but as the expression of 'Spirit' in the universal or abstract. Yet, when he would formulate the moral code, he enounces that "What a man ought to do, or what duties he ought to fulfil in order to be virtuous, is in an ethical community not hard to say. He has to do *nothing except what is presented, expressed, and recognized in his established relations.*"[3]

It is an obvious step from this to the ethic of 'the State, as by law established.' Standing on the instinctive sense of justice where it suits him, as in regard to punishment, Hegel decides, in the German manner, somewhat as Kant did before him, that "The difference between man and woman is the same as that between animal and plant."[4] Thus could the German-in-the-street find his moral intuitions established for him in a philosophy of the cosmos. Hegel, however, fiercely denounces[5] the view that marriage is a contract, which view, he says, "is, we must say, in all its shamelessness, propounded by Kant."[6] The plant, then, has rights. "Marriage is essentially an ethical relation";[7] and it *ought* not to be capable of dissolution. "But, after all, it is *only in itself*

[1] *Id.* § 100. [2] *Id.* § 103. [3] *Id.* § 150, *note.* [4] *Id.* § 166, *Add.* [5] *Id.* § 75, *note.*
[6] See Kant's *Metaphysische Anfangsgrunde der Rechtslehre* (Th. I of the *Metaphysik der Sitten*), ch. ii, *Das Eherecht.*
[7] *Philos. of Right*, § 161, *Add.*

indissoluble"[1]—that is to say, it *is* dissoluble; the ideal being "a mere moral command."[2] Primogeniture, again, is easily disposed of as belonging to "the necessary idea of the State."[3]

It is in his ethic of the State that Hegel most definitely reveals his ethical limitations. The State, he affirms, "is the realized ethical idea or ethical spirit.....having its reality in the particular self-consciousness *raised to the plane of the universal*," and so is "absolutely rational."[4] The State, plainly, is no such thing. Its external ethic is not universal but particularist, being but a rule in the interests of its members as against other groups, and is in practice much further from the ideal of 'universal spirit' than that of many of its members individually. By common consent, the standards of international morality are lower than those recognized within each community; which amounts to saying that States as such are less moral than their better members. A 'perfectly rational' morality can be reached only by developing a morality or law *of* nations to as high a pitch as that framed for their own members by each. In a word, Hegel's doctrine of the State as the realized ethical ideal is a virtual negation of his own professed philosophy at a vital point, and represents the stultification of moral ideals under the most pretentious profession of such ideals. It is a mere capitulation of philosophy to the powers that be.

This becomes fatally clear when he propounds[5] his view of "the ethical element in war." Not only does he contend that war is "not to be regarded as an absolute evil" which is acquiesced in by all who avow it to be in a given case the less of two evils; but he gives reasons for it which amount to saying that war may be desirable for war's sake as a means of "escaping the corruption" of "perpetual calm." The "ethical health of peoples," on this teaching, "is preserved" inasmuch as "finite pursuits are rendered unstable." It is put as a justification, in effect, of a war of aggression, that "successful wars have prevented civil broils and strengthened the internal power of the State." This last is part of Hegel's own 'note'; and an 'addition' reiterates the plea. In this doctrine, international morality is simply blotted out; and the citizen is merged in a State which as such defies ethic. "Sacrifice for the sake of the individuality of the State is the substantive relation of all the citizens, and is thus a universal duty."[6]

[1] *Id.* § 163, *Add.* [2] *Id.* § 176, *Add.*
[3] *Id.* §§ 180, *note*; 306. It will be observed that many of Hegel's most concrete judgments enter into the *Rechtslehre* as 'notes' added by himself or additions from the notes of his pupils.
[4] *Philos. of Right*, §§ 257, 258. [5] *Id.* § 324. [6] *Id.* § 325.

Whatever may have been the actual evolution of the 'will to war' in Germany, it is unquestionable that Hegel has here given it, in the name of 'philosophy of right,' the fullest license it needed. In this philosophy, the right of other nations than our own is simply not regarded as a thing to be considered. If Hegel is the last word in 'idealism,' then idealism yields in ethics the most complete negation of the very conception of moral law as universal for humanity. Our own poet, facing doubtfully a problem of private ethic, has fallen back on the monition:—

> Hold thou the good, define it well,
> For fear divine philosophy
> Should push beyond her mark, and be
> Procuress to the lords of hell.

It is a very arrogant philosophy of the 'divine' that has in this instance played that part. And in so far as Kant's doctrine of duty, as something to be done irrespective of or in the teeth of inclination or sympathy, is capable of being yoked together with Hegel's, the Kantian ethic also has potentially contributed to the political faith which wrought the World War. For Kant's first maxim, that our principle of action must be one which we can will to be universal, would not withhold from war-making one who held the Hegelian view. He would say: 'I am content that the nations shall by war put their claims in competition.' On the other hand, the other Kantian maxim, 'Regard every other individuality as an end, not as a mere means,' clashes absolutely with Hegel's teaching, in which the other nations are treated as mere means to the ends of his own. The direct guilt lies, then, on the Hegelian and not on the Kantian doctrine. We can but sum up that the nugatory character of the moral absolutism of Kant appears to have facilitated the acceptance of the political amoralism of Hegel, in which a distinct and intelligible principle of the supremacy of the State's might as against all right was propounded to a people fatally educated for its acceptance.

It is claimed for Hegel by some of his adherents that the PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT is not to be taken as setting forth an ethical doctrine in the sense of a 'message,' but simply as a survey of the actually existing ethical order—as part, in fact, of his schemed 'Phenomenology of the Mind'; and that he rectifies the State ethic of the PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT by setting forth, in the PHENOMENOLOGY and elsewhere, a higher view of ethical law. It may be left to the student to decide for himself how the didactic and hortatory language above cited is reconcilable with such an interpretation. In a mere scientific survey, how comes there a vehement declaration as to the true

conception of marriage? And how is any reader to suspect that Hegel, when explaining the value of war as an antidote to social corruption, is merely putting the view of the State-moralist as he knows it to be held, realizing all the while that from a higher point of view the policy of a State which seeks to maintain its health by assailing another is no more ethical than the 'economy' of the carnivore?

It is true that in the PHENOMENOLOGY, where he propounds a mystic doctrine of an "ethical substance," Hegel has written: "Over against this power and publicity of the ethical secular human order there appears, however, another power, the Divine Law. For the ethical power of the State, being the movement of self-conscious action, finds its opposition in the simple immediate essential being of the moral order; *qua* actual concrete universality, it is a force exerted against the independence of the individual; and *qua* actuality in general, it finds inherent in that essential being something other than the power of the State";[1] but there is no hint that the ethic of the State is thus overruled or discredited. On the contrary, it is declared that the simple gregarious spirit is dangerous in tendency, and that, "in order not to let them [guilds and associations] get rooted and settled in this isolation and thus break up the whole into fragments and let the common spirit evaporate, *government has from time to time to shake them to the very centre by War*..... By thus breaking up the form of fixed stability, spirit guards the ethical order from sinking into merely natural existence..... The negative essential being shows itself to be the might proper of the community and the force it has for self-maintenance. The community therefore finds the true principle and corroboration of its power *in the inner nature of divine law and in the kingdom of the nether world.*"[2]

If this last cryptic utterance is to be taken as salving ethics by hinting at the imperfection of the world as we know it, the summing-up would seem to be that Hegel had no ethic at all *for* that world beyond a notation of its phenomena. Whether that view really does any credit to Hegel is a question that may perhaps be left to the Hegelians. It would seem at least as charitable to conclude that in the hurricane of the Napoleonic wars, which as a matter of fact interfered seriously even with his abstract thinking,[3] he could not see his way to any higher ethic than that of the organized tribalism of Prussia. On either view, the estimate of the PHENOMENOLOGY as "an unique product of the Teutonic genius"[4] needs only to be newly emphasized in order to bring out its full significance. The residual truth is that the Teutonic genius has not been a

[1] *Phenomenology of Mind*, Eng. trans. 1910, ii, 442.
[2] *Id.* p. 449.
[3] See Mr. J. B. Baillie's Introd. to his trans. of the *Phenomenology*, vol. i, pp. ix–xiii.
[4] *Id.* p. v.

genius for morality as civilized men of other peoples commonly understand it.

§ 4. *Schopenhauer.*

German ethical thought, of course, did not move solely in one set of grooves. Schopenhauer (1788–1860), its *enfant terrible*, at once exploded the Kantian 'categorical imperative' and posited an ethical system of his own in his essay THE BASIS OF MORALITY (1840–60).[1] The criticism of Kant so far as it goes is very effective, though Schopenhauer ecstatically accepts Kant's philosophical figment of an unthinkable world of things-in-themselves, and his own formulated ethic is really an adaptation of Kant's. It is simply this, (1) that an "ethical sense" or morality properly so-called operates only when and in so far as we act with absolutely "disinterested goodwill and entirely voluntary justice";[2] (2) that human life in the mass is immoral or non-moral, and is merely kept within bounds by "the State, this masterpiece which sums up the self-conscious, intelligent egoism of all."[3] The State's action being thus non-moral, morality covers, by Schopenhauer's definition, a very small area of life; most action which passes as right being either self-gratifying or simply subservient to law. The "Basis of Morality" becomes thus a simple "basis of entirely disinterested action," and morality as delimited is in effect declared to be its own basis. All rectification of conduct on grounds of utility is by Schopenhauer's definition ruled outside of morality, his view admitting neither of an egoistic nor of an altruistic utilitarianism. For him as for Kant, actions, to possess any 'moral worth,' must be wholly unconnected with any 'egoistic' motive; so that acts of kindness done from a pleasure in kindness are excluded. The question, 'Moral worth to whom?' is no more answered by him than by Kant.

Yet he alleges that absolutely disinterested conduct "leaves behind a certain self-satisfaction which is called the approval of conscience," and that "injustice and unkindness, and still more malice and cruelty, involve a secret self-condemnation."[4] Schopenhauer thus alternately pictures the mass of mankind as in most of its conduct non-moral, yet as so morally-minded as to be constantly self-accusing for its departures even from kindness. At the same time he cites with approval a *Times* article of 1855 in which it is

[1] Written for a prize offered by the Danish Royal Society of Sciences in 1839. Though there was no other candidate, no prize was given, by reason of the violent tone of much of Schopenhauer's writing.
[2] Work cited, Eng. trans. by A. E. Bullock, 1903, p. 142.
[3] *Id.* p. 146.
[4] *Id.* p. 163.

suggested that a woman who cruelly ill-used a horse should be herself whipped. From Schopenhauer careful self-analysis is not to be looked for. His temper towards the philosophers he disliked, notably Hegel, is one of mere fury; where his ostensible ethical ideal called for the strictest impartiality as against the hostile bias.

Criticism apart, his treatise yields us neither any idea of the growth of the disinterested instinct to which he limits his term nor any save a popular criterion of disinterestedness. Treating the Hegelian state as actually non-moral, and standing up vehemently for the rights of animals, he may be held to have promoted moral feeling, with all his strange violences of repulsion; but his philosophic contribution to the problem he claimed to solve is disappointing.

§ 5. *Later German Ethics.*

It is open, however, to adherents of Schopenhauer's pessimism to maintain that he was right in denying the general capacity of men for moralization. In the literature of Germany since 1870, great as has been the output of specifically immoral doctrine, varying from Nietzschism to the unscrupulous propaganda of race-domination, scrupulous ethic has been as well represented as elsewhere. No one denies to the ethic of Carneri and Gizycki the merits of high rectitude and sanity; and some in this country, before the War, gave much encomium to Eucken, who insisted on a spiritual factor as alone capable of maintaining the higher life against 'materialistic' seductions, so-called. When the contest came, with all the religious forces of Germany officially arrayed in violent support of aggression, Eucken on one hand and Haeckel on the other went no less zealously into line with the spirit of racialism. And while the report of a deep change of view on Haeckel's part before his death is of extreme interest, it cannot alter the fact that he, as representing rationalistic monism, was at the outbreak of war as insensate a champion of national iniquity as any thinker of any other school. There could hardly be a more impressive support to the pessimistic view of life as only sectionally moral than the mere record of these developments. When the most arrogant pretensions to 'high' moral standards are seen to be 'false as dicers' oaths,' and a series of ostentatiously 'spiritual' philosophies seem to yield a national policy as hideous in practice as shameless in theory, the old question insistently recurs, What avail moral philosophies to control human life in the mass?

Testimony varies as to the amount of consciousness of guilt in the peoples of the Central Empires. Nowhere does it appear to be

either general or acute; and in the case of Austria competent native opinion even claims that the guilt of the War lies with a small handful of statesmen, the mass of the people being non-contributory. Yet who doubts that alike in Austria and in Germany the victory of the Central Empires would have been acclaimed by the great mass of the people with the wildest delight, as they in fact acclaimed particular victories? The more questionable seems the general possession anywhere, in human aggregates, of a 'sense of sin' under any circumstances; for in England in the years 1899–1902 it was only a minority, though perhaps a strong one, that denounced the policy which had forced the South African War; and so distinguished a moralist as the late Professor D. G. Ritchie championed the policy. So, in the United States, the now general opinion that the blowing up of the *Maine* was a case of spontaneous combustion of explosives has not created any general sense of shame as to the Cuban War, though there also a vigorous minority had resisted. Against the undoubted presence of strong moral feeling in the whole war effort of Britain and the United States in the World War, the signing of a powerful protest against the invasion of Belgium by a large number of prominent Spaniards, and the expression of much popular sympathy with the Allies in Sweden and Switzerland in contrast with the pro-Germanism of many of the upper class in both countries, is to be set the consideration that everywhere the capacity for blindly backing one's own nation, on the principle 'My country, right or wrong,' is predominant. Those who proceed upon that maxim in their own case seem never to restrain their censure of those who apply it on the enemy side.

But the just inference from the whole data is not pessimistic in the sense of a denial of the potentiality of progression in international any more than in any other morals. A pessimistic verdict is no more fitting here than as regards any other aspect of moral progress, though the fitting verdict must include an avowal of appalling potentialities of evil. Those indeed who still affirm the possession by man of a primordial moral sense which perfectly cognized right and wrong may fitly be pessimistic; for in the light of that conception all human progress has been a mysterious horror. The conception either of an absolute rightness or of an absolute power to perceive it is incompatible with the facts. But for those who see the sense of rightness as a progressive perception from an animal to a scrupulously reflective standpoint, the pessimistic interpretation is irrelevant. The moral sense so-called is no more an absolute than the æsthetic sense, which is equally intuitive, equally

subject to education and modification, and equally pregnant with stimulus to an ever new outlook on the cosmos. The very fact that moral feeling supplies the most vivid psychic colouring, so to say, for the cosmos is as much a promise of its perpetual progression as a cause for lament over its frustration.

Given that man has risen from the life of cave and group, cannibalism and beast-foray, to that of civilization with its thousandfold charm, by a mere succession of minute accretions of motive and knowledge, in which the cave-man evolves to man of science and moralist, a similar accumulation of motive and knowledge can evolve a rational ethic as between the nations. That the result will come about without any transcendental transmutation of human character in which man ceases to think of self is ground for chagrin only to the transcendentalist. The rest of us know that this is the only way in which man in any aspect has risen; and stepping-stones are even for poets no humiliating means of ascent. In fine, utilitarian impulse, perpetually at work in concert with other intuitive impulses, will secure the elimination of war as it has secured the elimination of slavery. And if man in general is ever to become pessimistic it will be because the species is losing the zest of life, not because it discovers that its inner life is a complex of utilitarian motive.

Chapter X

SUBSISTING ETHICAL ISSUES

The great technical and logical progress made since Mill in ethical argument and statement has meant much rectification, much widening of survey, but no really new ethical conceptions. In this sense, "morality makes no discoveries." The fundamental issues had all been faced in the evolution from Hobbes to the point at which Darwinism began to impose on scientific ethics the evolutionary conception, frequently put in brief, as by Hume, Hartley, Helvétius, Ferguson, and Hutton, and generalized by William Smith. But the cumulative process involves gradually as much change in thought as is effected in life by discoveries commonly so called. The culminating effect has necessarily been at once to establish the utilitarian principle and to re-establish, on a scientific basis, the so-called intuitionist principle, so long vitiated by the refusal to connect it with the other and the resolve to set intuition, as such, above reason.

Rightly regarded, intuition is seen to be the progressive register of the whole moral process, preserving both the central moral ideas which are durable because they are permanently valid and, in a state of transformation, those which are impermanent because they are erroneous and socially hurtful. It is precisely because the first class of bias-forms stands continually the test of utility that it is generally approved as constituting the elements of good moral character; and though this quasi-absolute ratification is for practical purposes the source of censures on the other forms of bias, it is only their demonstrable conflict with the general good that gives the ratification *its* permanence.

What has emerged from the long discussion is the recognition at once of the necessity and of the difficulty of the test. We need, it is evident, first and last, a *critical* utilitarianism. The old complaints of the difficulty remain broadly true: what was wrong in the arguments embodying them was the refusal to see that the attempt must be made to overcome the difficulty if there is to be moral betterment at all. All the valid criticisms passed upon the earlier statements of utilitarianism are but clearer and fuller statements of

the utilitarian problem. This holds of Sir Leslie Stephen's SCIENCE OF ETHICS and of Spencer's PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS, the latter the outcome of a long process of inquiry, of which the length was largely due to unreadiness to recognize the unalterable validity of the utility test as distinct from imperfect applications of it. And it is safe to say that all applications, Spencer's included, remain liable at many points to continuous revision.

For the conception of social utility varies endlessly. Emerging as a general intuition, it takes conflicting intuitional forms; and the validity for each person of the arguments to prove the utility of each form varies with his own intuition, howsoever acquired. At the same time, arguments and experience separately or jointly alter intuitions. The socialistic and the individualistic ideals of current politics are alike developments from older and vaguer intuitions; but they are subject to modification and even transposition, many men passing from either to the other under stress of experience and of persuasion. To call either a 'new intuition' is thus no more decisive of its final ethical validity than was the intuitional plea in regard to any earlier opinions. The case must be reasoned out; and the reasoning is always necessarily in terms of a series of problems of utility.

A system of 'applied ethics' is thus the great task which faces moralists to-day, as in Paley's and Bentham's day. It has several times been said of Mill that he abandoned the search for a science of ethics and fell back on the attempt to set up an art of ethics.[1] In that criticism there lurks a fallacy of terms analogous to that of applying the term 'free' to the process of decision. It is assumed that 'science of ethics' and 'art of ethics' are two clearly distinct conceptions, on the analogy of 'science of medicine' and 'art of medicine.' But, properly speaking, there is never both a science and an art of x. There is a science of x and an art of xy. There are sciences of biology and anatomy and physiology and of the operation of drugs and other re-agents; and there is an 'art of medicine' which is the application of treatments to given cases. Sciences are ordered knowledges; art is the application of them in action—as the art of painting is the application of the sciences of colour, light and shade, and perspective. The art may be exercised with much success without much exact study of the sciences; and the study of these may not yield success in the art. Similarly, we may say that there is a science of ethics and an art of *conduct*.

[1] Cp. Prof. T. C. Hall, *History of Ethics*, p. 596.

But what seems to be meant by contrasting the phrases 'science of ethics' and 'art of ethics' is to assert that debating general utilities is on all fours with painting or the practice of healing, and is not a scientific exercise. Really it is a main part of the scientific exercise, and its analogue is 'therapeutics,' which we class as science. We may say that there is an art of legislation, which is, or should be, an attempt to apply principles of ethics with the necessary regard to the practical conditions; but the formulation of the ethic upon which the legislation should proceed is part and parcel of ethical science. The term 'art' is relevant to action, common or individual, but not to the process of laying down general rules of action.

When, then, Höffding writes that ethics as an art precedes ethics as a science[1] he is but asserting that ethical ideas are in course of time more and more systematically sifted, and might as well have said that ethics as a habit precedes ethics as an art. For there is no point at which either the so-called art or the so-called science begins, the most primitive ethic having in it an element of fumbling science. Stephen puts the case more exactly when he says that "the problem is to find a scientific basis for the art of conduct."[2] This holds both for the individual, as private person and as citizen, and for the community, as legislating and as nation dealing with nations.

Progress in the science will perhaps be quicker in the ratio of the recognition that there remains an individual problem distinct from the national, and that the rational ideal involves at once the maximum of liberty compatible with the law of reciprocity and the elaboration of that law with constant regard to the potential lawlessness of the spirit of liberty. All serious moralists are agreed as to many of the things which form the staple of normal morality. They are also agreed that, while commercial fraud and physical violence are to be punished by law as crime, there are many serious offences against normal moral feeling—as untruthfulness, unkindness, ingratitude, selfishness—which, as such, it is idle to propose to punish. That being so, it is obvious that the ideal of legislation, which does not cover such forms of action, cannot be the coercion of all men into a way of life that will represent a complete and perfect reciprocity. Or, rather, we may say that the test of social utility prescribes the social toleration of much conduct admittedly or arguably not conducive to the good of all, because the systematic

[1] Cited by C. M. Williams, *A Review of the Systems of Ethics Founded on the Theory of Evolution*, 1893, p. 184.

[2] *Id.* p. 140.

attempt to enforce such conduct all round will be a wasteful effort even in regard to matters generally agreed upon, and therefore probably still more wasteful in regard to matters on which there is energetic dispute.

On the other hand, there has been a historic process of increasing social interference with what once passed for natural individual liberty, alongside of removal of interferences once reckoned essential. To-day, no one proposes to enforce church-going or heresy laws, while the law insists that all children shall be schooled. On both heads the agreement is practically complete, the utility test being the basis, with the added ethical recognition that children should be protected against careless parents who would leave them unschooled, as against cruel parents who would ill-use them. In regard to the conception of 'nuisance,' too, there is a large body of law which restrains individual liberty in the interests of sanitation, quietude, and decency.

Here we meet with one of the great difficulties of the legislator. The drunken man is a social nuisance when he obtrudes his drunkenness, and a social evil in that he inflicts poverty on his family and sets up evil heredities. Further, drinking is demonstrably a source of much crime, and, all the laws for its restraint having failed to eliminate the evil, it is contended that it must be made impossible by entirely preventing within the community both the manufacture and the importation of intoxicating drinks. Such is at present the legislative practice of the United States, the majority of the electors having so decreed. In the opinion of Mill, sixty years ago, such a law was indefensible;[1] and this for utilitarian reasons, broadly summed up in the proposition that it is a worse evil to deprive a majority of a freedom which they do not abuse than to accord to a minority a freedom which they do abuse. But the utilitarian problem is here more difficult than Mill realized. The sense of deprivation of innocent freedom is certainly in itself an evil; but how shall we frame a calculus of the amount of evil so suffered in comparison with the amount of evil prevented?

When the majority agree to pass the prohibitive law, ostensibly only a minority suffers deprivation. One minority, then, is coerced to prevent another from abusing its freedom. Some of the majority, indeed, use the argument that all use of alcohol is insanitary, save as any poisonous drug may be beneficial in sickness; but here there obviously opens up a vista of other prohibitions, from which the vast

[1] *On Liberty*, chs. v and vi.

majority recoil. Tobacco, tea, coffee, stays, and many other popular indulgences can and do unquestionably injure health; but the briefest practical reflection shows that the abstract health argument cannot there be applied; and for legislatures the drink question is one of singling out for prohibition an indulgence that for many is specially harmful. Probably even most opponents of alcohol prohibition admit the expediency of opium prohibition in China, though opium also is unquestionably a valuable drug.

It will be found extremely difficult to state a decisive moral rule save in the utility test as applied in view of the results of the experiment. Should it be found that after a few years the great majority are satisfied that they are better without alcohol as a beverage, the utility test will ostensibly have been satisfied, unless there is a *per contra*. If it be proved, for instance, that the illicit trade is irrepressible, and that it involves a fresh crop of crimes, or that drug-taking abounds much more than formerly, the experiment will have been more or less a failure. But if there be no serious *per contra* it will be difficult in the name of ethics to argue that the restriction of the liberty of the minority is an evil to be averted at the cost of the great evils eliminated. The tradition of authoritarian or absolute ethics runs as high in the United States as anywhere; and not many years ago, by common consent, hotel accommodation was denied in New York to an eminent Russian novelist who was accompanied by a lady to whom he was not married. In that case the social convention of the marriage-form was held to be of absolute force: had both the man and the woman been repeatedly divorced, with 'guilt' on both sides, they would have suffered no ostracism provided they had repeated the marriage ceremony. If, then, the community which thus enforced a traditionary absolutist ethic the other day is now legislating on an openly utilitarian motive as against the tradition and convention of liberty, the paramountcy of the utilitarian principle would seem to be there on the way to establishment, though for the present many or most of the voters concerned probably act on sentiment without any inquiry into the ethical issues.

The same probably holds true of the movement of popular opinion in the direction of what is broadly described as Socialism. Its main driving force is the conviction among wage-earners that the wealth they see enjoyed by the rich, being concretely the product of the hand-workers' labour, ought to be distributed among them. Thus far the thinking is no more ethical than the impulse

of the trading and employing class to accumulate wealth.[1] Insofar, however, as Socialism is advocated by men who, themselves either supported by unearned income or capable of profiting by the existing social arrangements, maintain that reciprocity of services and equality of distribution constitute the only defensible principles of social structure, the doctrine is ethical, and challenges ethical consideration. When that is given it is quickly found that the problem raises a whole series of utility tests all involving contingent reasonings, and that no other mode of discussion carries any persuasion. The strength of the Socialist case lies first and last in its application of the principle of reciprocity; its difficulty, ethically speaking, is an extension of the difficulty of applying the Golden Rule beyond the limits of friendly intercourse.

For the majority of Socialists it is enough to propound doctrines of rights held intuitively—that is, as the result of teaching intuitively assented to; but the ethical formula to which they are reducible is that of the greatest good of the greatest number. It is therefore incumbent upon thoughtful Socialists to follow out with special care a series of problems which the average adherent of the cause does not consider at all; and the very fact of this indifference leads the thinkers to realize that an economic Socialism without Eugenics and a highly developed system of education offers on analysis no prospect of such results as would retain for 'greatest good' any meaning beyond 'average satisfaction.' The ideal of the largest possible number of well-fed, well-clothed, and not overworked persons able to enjoy themselves nightly in picture palaces is one which would at once repel most of those who have ever reflected on the meaning of 'good.' Having their own ideals, they deny that they can rightly be called upon to labour for a 'good' which they contemn. The right mode of common progression, then, must be one that secures agreements for successive steps of State action which admittedly promise an increase of average well-being without any loss of forms of intellectual and artistic good that are in themselves confessedly licit.

As we have seen,[2] the negative conception of the licit, not the positive conception of the universally useful, must be the principle limiting the State's repressive action. If we are to enact that everybody must be held to work which will visibly do service to the largest possible number of people, we shall soon cut off original art, non-industrial research, and speculative study, liberty to follow

[1] Compare Juvalta, as cited by T. Whittaker, *The Theory of Abstract Ethics*, 1916, p. 86.
[2] Above, p. 397.

which things is as plainly the à priori right of any as is the right to seek material welfare, up to the limit of trespass on the equal rights of others. To such propositions the thoughtful Socialist gives ready assent; but serious perplexity at once arises when to the economic doctrine of the right-to-work and the right to an equal share in the product is added the doctrine of Pensions for Mothers. Even those who propound this are in many cases disposed to admit that it could be applied only under carefully calculated restrictions as to numbers. That everybody else should be bound to work for the support of any number of mothers who might bear any number of children is not a plausible proposition. But, even under the limitations set by a statistic of the number of births compatible with a high standard of comfort, the proposal elicits at once intuitive and utilitarian objections which must be met if the doctrine is to rank as anything more than a Utopism.

When it is propounded *without* regard to the issues raised by the 'law of population' it stands for the kind of claim of 'right' dictated by intuitive egoism. When that is faced by the demonstration that an uncontrolled birth-rate always yields a more rapid increase than can be coped with in any given country by the existing industrial system,[1] there generally ensues an admission that the birth-rate must be controlled; and in most European countries the control has set in, Germany—at least as regards Berlin—having begun to exhibit, before the War, as rapid a decrease in the birth-rate as any other country. Yet in England in most industries the workers still reared more male children than could be taken into employment in their own trade, thus leaving a constant pressure on the labour market, which could be relieved only by emigration. In the United States and Australia, on the other hand, laws have been passed from time to time restricting immigration by property tests or other means, though in the States the need for 'cheap' labour from Europe had latterly balanced the fear of pauper immigrants. The practical situation thus remained on the whole one of evaded responsibility, as it very plainly was in England in the case of trade unions which expressly restricted the number of apprentices allowed to enter their industry, without regard to the number of children reared by their members.

When, however, it is seen that large families mean protracted hardship for their own members, parents and children alike, and also an excessively high infant death-rate, self-interest generally

[1] The problem is re-argued in the author's *Economics of Progress*, chs. vii and viii.

begins to operate in the case of many, and the birth-rate falls. Without such restriction, economically speaking, it is impossible to maintain a high standard of comfort for the mass; and no conceivable industrial system can make it otherwise. Yet there remain many who propagate without voluntary restraint; and when such parents succeed, as happens sometimes among agricultural labourers, in rearing very large families, there is often put for them the claim that the labourer with a large family shall be paid proportionally high wages—a thing which is neither possible to his employer nor tolerable to his fellow-workmen. That being so, the claim for Mothers' Pensions from the State is put forward, as aforesaid, by some without any acknowledgment of the need for restriction, by others with proposals for a family limit in terms of a statistical calculation. As such proposals admit the injustice of calling upon the community to maintain all the children that may be produced by any parents, they involve the question whether parents who propagate beyond the prescribed limit should be put in restraint—a very difficult question.

On the other hand, all advocacy of family limitation is still met by protests in the name of morality, which usually ignore the problem of the essential amorality of propagating in excess of the power to maintain. Such objectors, as a rule, do not even suggest Pensions for Mothers; they merely refuse to face any of the practical problems of over-population, at most following up a denial of the morality of the ordinary methods of restraint by allegations of bad hygienic results. So long as the hygienic, social, and industrial evils resulting from a high birth-rate are ignored, such allegations incur the charge of insincerity of doctrine; and when the framers consent to weigh the utilities in a scientific fashion they have abandoned the à priori position that contraceptive methods are under any circumstances morally illicit. The issue thus begins to reveal itself as one vital alike to ethical science and to Socialist theory.

> The most noticeable of the objections made to the practice of family limitation is put by Prof. Carveth Read in the confident statement that "a smaller proportion of children come in each generation from those classes that have the greater intelligence, character, and health, and a larger proportion from those that are every way inferior. Comfort increases in the wealthier classes and the death-rate falls; but the average quality of the population deteriorates. During the nineteenth century the average quality fell."[1] This is haphazard

[1] *Natural and Social Morals*, 1909, pp. 157-58.

statement, with fallacious reasoning. Obviously, the largest number of *reared* children per family will not come from the least healthy stocks. It is among these, as Prof. Read himself recognizes, that the death-rate is highest. There is really no evidence, again, for the assumption that the 'level' of intelligence among the workers fell during the nineteenth century. There was, indeed, multiplication under bad physical conditions, with little education, in the period up to the establishment of State education. That is to say, the worst degeneration took place when restraint was at a minimum. But since then there has been a rapid fall of both birth-rate and death-rate among the workers as among the middle class; and the limitation of births among the textile workers has latterly even become a ground for outcry. That, however, always fails to face the facts of death-rate, misery, and lowering of standards of life and health, caused by large families.

Other opponents of family limitation do not scruple, without the slightest show of evidence, to cast wholesale aspersion against those who reckon with the evils of over-population. One writer, recognizing that "every advance in personal security brings with it overcrowding and an increased strain on the means of subsistence," goes on to put the argument that "These, again, are redressed by famine, war, disease, and pestilence. Artificial checks are likely to be a worse remedy than those provided by nature. They bring about a permanent degeneration of character, *whereas the others pass by, and may leave the nation even stronger for what it has gone through.* Sanguine inventors tell us that the discovery and improvement of explosives and engines of death will make war impossible; but there are worse evils than war—and a peace where it would be easy for every man to take his neighbour's life, or upset the social arrangements on which private and public security depend, would be one of them."[1]

This balancing of optimism and pessimism is ostensibly made in the interests of a theistic theory of cosmic 'purpose,' the purpose being by implication one of keeping humanity on foot by that struggle for existence posited by Darwinism as the factor or co-efficient of all natural progress. If that be a correct interpretation, the argument falls completely into Darwin's own fallacy of making the biological conditions of past progress take the place of ethical aims, tests, and standards. But it outgoes Darwin's logical error by substituting simple aspersion of a proposed method of minimizing evil for a process of proof. For the assertion that all artificial checks to over-population bring about a permanent degeneration of character there is absolutely no evidence; and it invites the

[1] *The Ethical Aspects of Evolution Regarded as the Parallel Growth of Opposite Tendencies*, by W. Benett, 1908, p. 23.

rejoinder that an unreasoned prejudice actually does seem to set up a kind of degeneration. Unmeasured calumny is not good evidence of an ethical disposition.

It might, indeed, be fairly argued that resort to such checks as abortion in the period of the Roman Empire meant degeneration of character, besides involving gratuitous loss of life. But this critic has given no grounds for excluding from the list of methods "provided by nature" for limitation of families those of infanticide and simple exposure, which have been very widely practised by primitive peoples. He ought, then, to ask whether those methods do not more clearly involve degeneration of character than do those of modern science; and his failure to raise the issue testifies to a polemical as distinct from a scientific purpose.

No less uncritical is the proposition that the checks of famine, war, disease, and pestilence "pass by, and *may* leave the nation even stronger for what it has gone through." The admission of the constant 'natural' tendency to overcrowding in the absence of destructive checks, it is obvious, involves the admission that the checks must also operate perpetually—unless another ignored check specified by Malthus, that of vice, is to take the part of the others and be, like them, acquitted of degenerative character. If it be not so posited, the proposition that the other checks "pass by" is self-stultifying, for overcrowding means pestilence or nothing, and pressure on the means of subsistence means either famine or high infant mortality. A rational sociology would inquire whether chronic war is not a source of degeneration of character in some directions, and whether the habitual procreation of children who cannot be reared must not come under the same description.

All that can be inferred from such paralogistic reasoning and aspersive estimate is that they proceed upon the anti-utilitarian temper which finds fault with the acceptance of the term 'pleasure' as an account of the aim of action. If, however, humouring this verbalist temper, we substitute 'attainment of desire' (which means exactly the same thing), we shall probably still be met by the protest that many desires ought to be renounced, which, again, is a merely irrelevant truth. If there be any logical bottom to the 'anti-Hedonist' case, its champions ought to be able to advance the proposition that *non*-attainment of one's desire can be made the end of action. But no such thesis has ever been put. We get only the ancient commonplace that in pursuing their desires men often encounter, of aforethought, peril, toil, hardship, and wounds—a thing that nobody ever denied or doubted. It is nothing to the purpose. The mere maxim that some desires ought to be subordinated to or effaced by other desires was a commonplace before Epicurus

embraced it. Equally familiar is the truth that the attainment of a desired thing may give no happiness. All that is mere skirmishing outside the issue.

In the argument now before us, which appears to contemplate a continuous pressure of natural evil on man as part of the cosmic 'purpose' for his development, it would seem that the wish is father to the thought that certain human efforts to minimize natural evil must fail, because they proceed upon a desire to maximize welfare and minimize ill-fare. But again it is impossible to find a logical standing-ground for the anti-Hedonist case. Man's inventions of fire, weapons, tools, clothing and houses, all proceeded on the same motives of escaping pain and attaining pleasure or fulfilment of desire. If the rational control of propagation be a defiance of cosmic 'purpose,' so were all these; and the conception of purpose becomes as unmeaning in the hands of its latest exponent as in those of any of the theologians of the past, who have so invariably stultified it by combining with it the conception of omnipotence, whereunder, logically, all that happens must be purposed.

From such reasoning-in-a-circle we turn perforce once more to the human and intelligible purpose of bettering our lives in terms of our judgment, knowing that to be fallible, and therefore seeking to guard against error, but dismissing with the requisite firmness the opposition which in any concrete case is an affectation of infallibility in particular by judges who impute fallibility in general.

Even when, however, the rational necessity for a control of the birth-rate is admitted there remain, as aforesaid, many utilitarian grounds for demur to the policy of Pensions for Mothers in the present stage of social and moral science. After recognition of the need for restriction comes recognition of the need for Eugenics—the breeding of the human race with a view to both its physical and its mental improvement. And thus far Eugenics is in the main a science of tentatives. It recognizes that many adults, in the interest of a healthy common stock, ought not to propagate at all. Yet even those who repel the common Catholic opinion that on no grounds can the right of propagation be vetoed are unable to deny that it is immensely difficult to delimit. And while there can be no pretence of a right to prevent propagation by men and women in general, however little prospect there may be of the production of a good stock in a large percentage of the population, there is a strong negative ethical case against any proposal that all shall work for the maintenance of the children of all. The general Socialist case itself is a combination of a doctrine of the Right to Work with

a doctrine of the right *not* to work for others beyond a certain point. And the latter principle may as fitly be founded on by either Socialists or Individualists in connection with the population problem as by Socialists on the primary ground of the ethics of labour.

> That reforming movements tend to proceed upon ill-considered à priori theories of right is an old observation, and modern Socialism abundantly illustrates the rule. Democracy, however, is in this respect on all fours with aristocracy and autocracy. An able teacher has written in this connection that "This conception of an ideal law, antecedent and superior to the positive law, universally valid and binding on everybody even when free from the restrictions of positive law, has given us the great system of Roman Law, the modern codes built on it, and the system of International Law; and it is the basis of the ethical intuitionism of Butler and Kant, and of the revolutionary morality of Rousseau. To Rousseau, again, may be traced the crude political theories of modern democracy. The doctrine of the 'rights of man' given and guaranteed by Nature is the central dogma of Liberalism."[1]
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> It is just as central a dogma of Conservatism when traditionary rights are being challenged. The same statesmen have been heard in the House of Commons flouting the 'rights of man' in one session and affirming them in another, in both cases by way of repelling innovation. And it is obvious that if the same ethical apriorism underlies Roman Law, democratic idealism, and the ethics of Butler and Kant, it is no specialty of democracy. What is needed in all cases alike is the testing of the intuition by the principles of consistency and utility—that revision of intuitions which we have seen to be the task of progressive morality.

As this chapter is a mere outline indication of the problems of Applied Ethics which face our age, it is impossible to include in it a statement of all the ethical cruces of Socialism. Suffice it to say that they include the question whether a socialist community could ethically compel any of its members to give their labour either directly or indirectly to carry on industries which they regard as unnecessary, wasteful, foolish, or harmful. At every such question the fundamental difficulties of a complete law of reciprocity reintroduce themselves; and the critical Socialist is apt to find himself faced by a new general problem of risk of degeneration under a system which seeks to provide for all needs with a minimum of effort on the part of all or most persons. The facing of that problem on all its main facets is part of the task of those who are concerned to moralize their politics.

[1] F. Ryland, *Ethics: An Introductory Manual*, 1890, p. 53.

The dangers of social degeneration are thoughtfully posited, with a leaning to pessimism, by Professor Carveth Read in his concluding chapter on "Moral Degeneracy" in NATURAL AND SOCIAL MORALS. The thorough study of this problem, however, involves a reckoning with the fact that what may be described as degeneration goes on in some degree in nearly all species at all stages of their evolution—as obviously among savages as among the civilized. It further raises the fundamental issue whether any developments of moral as distinct from physical evil are strictly to be reckoned as degenerative. Our whole survey of moral evolution reveals a perpetual confronting of what we recognize as moral good with what we class as moral evil. It is only where we can definitely trace forms of anti-social bias to heredities primarily established by bad physical conditions that the concept of degeneracy becomes clearly applicable. Where such conditions are lacking we seem bound to admit that moral evil figures in nature as a self-maintaining variation. Professor Read's view of the human sexual relation as in certain respects a degeneration from the animal (Work cited, p. 150) is an interesting speculation, but involves a series of unproved assumptions. His pessimistic forecasts, however (p. 155 *sq.*), call for consideration from all sociologists, and force themselves upon utilitarians.

If Mandeville was so far right, as from Darwin's standpoint he certainly was, in maintaining that all human progress is the outcome of the difficulty of living, it is at least reasonable to hold that the elimination of difficulty from life would be a false ideal, even while we are bending all our social and personal efforts to the elimination of many kinds of difficulty. Darwin's error was to want to maintain all the old collective difficulties of existence, whereas the very aim of betterment is to reduce them. But the rational effort recognizes that *for the individual* certain difficulties are part of discipline. And it is not enough to argue that difficulties of many kinds will always abound for all who seek knowledge, skill, truth, wisdom, and beauty. We must face at the outset the question whether there may not be harm in systematically facilitating the maximum amount of comfortable human existence by methods which take away from parenthood all pressure of economic responsibility. That the rule of the greatest good of the greatest number is as necessarily subject to delimitation as the Golden Rule becomes obvious the moment we ask ourselves whether European populations are ethically called upon to promote the extension of the populations of Africa and China at their present standards. This no one maintains. Are individuals in European nations then

ethically called upon to promote the extension of their own numbers without regard to any other considerations than those of physical well-being? Here again the rational answer must be in the negative. Rational collectivist ethic is forced to the conception of 'good' as realized in an entire society or civilization yielding the largest number of licit individual ideals rather than the largest number of merely comfortable persons. Over these individual ideals, in turn, there is endless possibility of dispute; and it is only by untiring concern for social utility that they can be so tested as to yield good rules for social action.

Already a wide popularity has been attained for the large and simple ideal that everyone should be given as good a chance as possible of 'making the best of himself.'[1] The next and much more difficult step is to decide how that chance can best be given. It will necessarily be calculated, to begin with, on lines of what we may term the collectivist egoism of each State. The international problem is the joint control of those egoisms by an ethic that applies to the relations of States the law of reciprocity, which further requires to be calculated anew as regards the backward populations that do not or cannot yet constitute self-governing States. In view of both problems, the institution of a League of Nations is ostensibly the most important event that has yet taken place in the history of civilization, and the obstacles to its success appear to be the most momentous in human affairs. It is a matter of fairly common agreement that any renewal of war upon a large scale may involve an actual downfall of civilization comparable to that which took place in the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, and this under circumstances of moral horror beyond precedent.

At such a juncture optimistic predictions cannot be impressive. If the moral relations of States are still highly problematic, no less so are the tasks of self-purification lying before the nations separately. In all there is a large 'criminal class,' which seems to increase in self-maintaining power, and which is nowhere very scientifically dealt with. For lack of clear recognition of the criterion of utility criminal treatment is hampered by conflicting conceptions of humanity and punishment that exclude consistent action. Still more anomalous is the state of public practice in regard to the maintenance of life that is alike morally and physically worthless. Criminal lunatics, idiots at a subter-human stage, quasi-human organisms devoid of self-consciousness, are anxiously and expensively preserved

[1] This has recently been publicly put, with much acceptance, by the Prince of Wales. It was earlier formulated by the German Carneri.

through fear of opening the way to disregard of life, at a cost which might provide many opportunities of better life to organisms well worth them. Only a concurrent cultivation of ethical and social science can lead to a right solution of such problems. A few years ago fervid opposition was offered in the name of liberty to legal measures for the prevention of heedless and continuous propagation by the half-witted at the public expense.

The ultimate difficulty of the problem as a whole is that of drawing a line of sacredness in the grades of more or less worthless life, distinguishing between curable and incurable insanity, hopeless and alterable criminality. And as there is no prospect of any speedy solution of these problems by direct legislative action, it is the more imperative that both legislative and individual action should be taken to promote Eugenics in every sense. Every human ideal that can bear discussion—in which description does not come the ideal of leaving everything to an uncontrolled 'Nature'—is served by any species of action which raises the physical standards and the mental calibre and culture of the majority. That may be put as at once a summary statement and a vindication of the ethics of utility.

In the systematic study of our concrete problems of action will probably be found the solution of much of the long debate on ethical theory, in particular of the disputes around Egoistic Hedonism and Universalistic Hedonism (the cumbrous terms of the copious and careful treatise of Professor Sidgwick), Hedonism *versus* Self-Realization, and Altruism *versus* Egoism, which have so long occupied the English ethical schools. A patient study of the various doctrines will reveal that each one of the concepts specified practically involves the correlative, alike as to theory and as to practice, even as utilitarianism involves intuitionism; and intuitionism, on pressure, always resorts to utilitarianism. Egoistic Hedonism, so-called, which ostensibly means a reference of all moral questions to the test of our own desire for happiness, is, and can be, no more a rejection of the law of reciprocity than a profession of Universalistic Hedonism is or can be a renunciation of self-interest. If I profess Universalistic Hedonism—that is, a reference of all ethical problems to the test of the happiness of all—I still apply that test in terms of my own sense of happiness, and only so far as I am happy in conceiving others' happiness. If I profess Egoistic Hedonism, I am merely obtruding this fact in my confession of ethical faith. Both formulas are therefore unsatisfactory.

The ethical question here roots in psychology, as was seen by

Hume when he wrote that all moral opinion rests ultimately upon a sentiment, and that the happiness of others is a normal constituent element in ours—that is, where it is not incompatible with ours. An entirely egoistic relation to life, in the sense of excluding all recognition of others' well-being as matter of satisfaction, or all claim of others upon us, would, if it were possible, be wholly outside ethics: it is in the conception of others' claims that morality begins. And to avow that we regard the well-being and the claims of others as they are adjusted or adjustable to our own happiness is only to say in a particular way what has been said by all the moralists who annex happiness to virtue. It is also but a form of the text, What profiteth it a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

The same issue arises and dissolves in the theoretic debate as to altruism and egoism, the former being ultimately an expression of the latter. The real differences between men in these regards are differences in the degree of their inclusion of others' happiness in their purview and pleasure, egoism being necessary to the appreciation of altruism, and *vice versa*. It cannot be right, as we have already seen, to devote ourselves wholly to pleasuring others, for in that case each would be refusing to let the other succeed. The maxim 'Live for others' is intelligible only as an injunction to seek happiness in caring for others up to a certain point: to cease altogether to pursue our own good, mental and physical, would be to become impotent to serve others. And where the lesson that happiness can be found in seeking others' good is most needed, in respect of natural bias, it is least communicable by exhortation. No one within the limits of the normal is wholly egoistic in the sense above indicated; all of us are more or less healthily selfish; and few of us will pretend to be 'supremely unselfish.' The real ethical problem is not the wording of our theory of our own motives, but the attainment of that working reciprocity which is the end of all ethic.

How unreal the debate about motives can become is indicated by the conclusion of T. H. Green's strenuously and conscientiously reasoned PROLEGOMENA TO ETHICS:—

> "To most people sufficient direction for their pursuits is afforded by claims so well established in conventional morality that they are intuitively recognized, and that a conscience merely responsive to social disapprobation would reproach us for neglecting them. For all of us it is so in regard to a great part of our lives. But the cases we are considering are those in which some 'counsel of perfection' is needed, which reference to such claims does not supply, and which has to be derived

> from reference to a theory of ultimate good. In such cases many questions have to be answered which intuition cannot answer before the issue is arrived at to which the theory of ultimate good seems applicable; but, then, the cases only occur for persons who have leisure and faculty for dealing with such questions. For them the essential thing is that their theory of the good should afford a really available criterion for estimating those further claims upon them which are not enforced by the sanction of conventional morality, and a criterion which *affords no plea to the self-indulgent impulse.* Our point has been to show, in the instance given, that such a criterion is afforded by the theory of ultimate good as a perfection of the human spirit resting on the will to be perfect (which may be called in short the theory of virtue as an end in itself), but not by the theory of good as consisting in a maximum of possible pleasure."

If 'pleasure' be not used here with the old intent to quibble over the different applications to physical and mental satisfaction, there is really no antithesis. My pleasure is my self-realization; and whether that involves a fixed ambition to reach the South Pole, or to find a cure for cancer, or to hunt foxes, or to spend my life as far as may be in painting or in music-making or in athletics, I am thereby pursuing my ideal of perfection. If I am to be turned from all or any of those pursuits by the monition that they "afford a plea to the self-indulgent impulse," and that certain other pursuits —as, tending lepers, or charity organization, or coaching students in ethics—exclude the plea of that impulse; and if, nevertheless, these pursuits wholly repel me, they can be made to seem to me pursuits of perfection only in terms of some *other* criterion. And where and how is that other criterion to be found? If on the other hand they or some of them do attract me, what is the ethical difference on that side between them and the quest of the South Pole, or devotion to painting or to music?

Those who *have* found their ideal of perfection in a life that most readily meets the conception of self-sacrifice, as that of Father Damien, have often found their motive in the hope of a future life.[1] If they had solaced their long self-sacrifice with a moderate measure of self-indulgence, would that have lessened their human merit?[2] And, on the other hand, is the hope of future blessedness fundamentally alien to the hope of triumph which carries the explorer through toil and suffering immeasurable, or it may be to death? The ethical discriminations of the idealist will not really endure

[1] This seems to be ignored by Green in a connection where it is essential to sound argument to note it. *Prolegomena*, bk. iii, ch. v, § 258.

[2] Stevenson, it may be remembered, repudiated the idea that it would.

testing: they are but attempts to put a new impressiveness on the old 'counsel of perfection' which finds its way at times even into conventional morality, the counsel to seek things that will be found worth seeking for, to pursue active ends, to cultivate the joys of the mind, because these yield enduring and recurring pleasure where the commonplace direct pursuit of pleasure for mere pleasure's sake is notoriously the road to disenchantment. To call the latter pursuit Hedonism and the other 'self-realization,' as seems to be done by some of Green's school, is to pay oneself with words. But so often is it done that it is much to be regretted that the term 'Hedonism' was ever accepted in ethics.

If Green's criterion possesses any final potency which is not to be found in that which is above described as critical utilitarianism, it should admit of being turned upon that with the kind of effect claimed for it as against so-called Hedonism. But, pitted against the utilitarianism which recognizes its own difficulties, the formula of the ultimate good as perfection resting on the will to be perfect not only yields no new criterion: it obscures by its terminology the real problem, which is to find the criterion of perfection. The formula is old, appealing in turn as it has done to the ancient pagan, to the Christian, to the eighteenth-century deist; but the measure of perfection remains to be found, for all who are not satisfied with theological models. Newman's idea of perfection set the pious Catholic peasant above Plato; Butler's set the model parishioner above Locke; what is that of the latest perfectionism? A concrete inquiry after the best way of managing our collective affairs may haply bring us nearer an intelligent answer than will any effort to re-tread the ethical path of Kant and Hegel; and may even prove as good a discipline in weaning our youth from self-indulgence as has been the Anglo-Hegelian philosophy; which, in point of fact, does not appear to have turned English universities into scenes of Stoic self-denial.

The power of logomachy, on the other hand, to divert reflection from the real problems of life and morals is suggested by the fate which seems to have overtaken the SCIENCE DE LA MORALE of M. Charles Renouvier.[1] That very able treatise, proceeding upon previous philosophical studies of its author, aimed at a scientific system of applied ethics, pointing out the unfitness of the Golden Rule as anything more than a guide to neighbourly intercourse, and seeking a code which should satisfy the principles of justice. It may be

[1] 2 tom. 1869.

said to stand for a more scientific treatment of applied ethics than was then to be found in England; and indeed the general handling of ethics in France in the decade before Sedan was more quickly responsive to the doctrine of evolution than in England.[1] But M. Renouvier had introduced his treatise with a declaration of fealty to Kant, a pronouncement on 'free-will' which took for granted the relevance of the term to the problem, and a hint that determinists might expect severe treatment though he withheld his hand. The due result was a new polemic over free-will, which M. Renouvier handled as arbitrarily as any, and no scientific progress.

No direct logical exposition, apparently, can bring home to intuitionists the fact that they are not really discussing a moral problem at all, but merely trading in incompatible concepts. M. Boutteville, repelling the Christian doctrine of predestination, was as dogmatic as M. Renouvier in affirming the indispensableness of the principle of free-will to ethics, charging the Church with denying it, whereas the Church had long been a scene of internecine debate between affirmers and deniers who equally failed to elude the snare of verbal fallacy. In our own day one of the most thoughtful of English writers on ethics, who has been at skilful pains to show that the word 'could' carries two meanings, discusses the term 'free-will'[2] without indicating that 'free' and 'unfree' are alike as inapplicable to the process of moral judgment as to any other process of causation as such, being applicable only to presence or absence of interferences with action. Thus the old logomachy subsists.

It is arguable, of course, that we might agree to apply the term 'free' to thought-processes upon an accepted definition, as we agree to apply it in 'freethought,' to discriminate between submissive and unsubmissive opinion, prescribed and independent judgment. But in the 'free-will' controversy there is not even the recognition of ambiguity in the term 'free,' and therefore no recognition of the impossibility of applying either that or the contrary concept to the whole field of mental causation. All that results is a false issue, which sets up another false issue about 'responsibility,' a conception reducible to actuality only by an à posteriori inquiry which posits the possibilities of moral influence. It may be, then, that the required atmosphere for open-minded reconsideration will be

[1] *E.g. La Morale fouillée dans ses fondements*, par P. Sièrebois (Boissière), and *La Morale de l'église et la morale naturelle*, par M.-L. Boutteville (both 1866).
[2] G. E. Moore, *Ethics*, pp. 210, 217.

adequately created only when men have grown accustomed to handle all questions of conduct scientifically, letting no concept stand unchallenged merely because it is ostensibly à priori, but forcing all to justify themselves at the bar of ethical reason. When we are deeply concerned about results above all things there cannot well be such waste of energy on bad metaphysics as has taken place in the past.

And such a discipline may finally dispose of the singular *émeute* set up in English ethical discussion by Professor F. H. Bradley in his once academically notorious demonstration against the ethical doctrines of Professor Sidgwick.[1] It was perhaps an irritated perception of the inconclusiveness of Professor Sidgwick's ethical logic (leaving as it did that earnest thinker conscious of a need for a future state to round his scheme of moral controls) that led Mr. Bradley to propound his singularly dogmatic formulas of "My Station and its Duties" and "the *aisthesis* of the *phronimos*"—the *phronimos* being the moral sage to whom Aristotle left the ultimate decision of all detail problems in ethics. This looked like a complete denial of the utility of what passes for ethical philosophy in general; and, coming from a metaphysician who had contended that "to gain education a man must study in more than one school," and that skepticism, as "an attempt to become aware of and to doubt all preconceptions,"[2] is the chief need of English philosophy, the ostensible demand for a return to popular dogmatism was surprising. If it is expedient that "metaphysics, even if it end in total skepticism, should be studied by a certain number of persons,"[3] it would seem equally expedient that ethics should be similarly studied. Yet Mr. Bradley, in his ETHICAL STUDIES (1876), not only propounded his ethical creed of "My Station and its Duties," and his reference of all problems to the moral sage, but affirmed that he who thinks to be better than the rest of the world is already on the threshold of immorality[4]—as if that were not equally true of everybody else.

A study of the evolution of morals would probably make it clear to Mr. Bradley that Phronimos, in the Stone Age, was in the habit, at a pinch, of eating his family; that he invented human sacrifice and many insane taboos; that he framed the sacrificial legislation of the Pentateuch; that he long held firmly by slavery in Greece, and by judicial torture in Christendom; and that in Germany he figured authoritatively in the causation of the World War. As late

[1] See Professor Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, and his papers in *Mind*, 1877.
[2] *Appearance and Reality*, preface.
[3] *Id.* introduction, 3rd ed. p. 5.
[4] *Ethical Studies*, p. 180.

as 1899, Mr. Bradley announced[1] that the ETHICAL STUDIES "in the main still expresses my opinion," and "would have been reprinted had I not desired to rewrite it." A serious study of the problems which now face Phronimos in connection with the duties of his station in life would probably dictate a more complete rewriting than was then thought necessary. Thus on the practical path of debate over urgent issues of public action might be attained a more philosophic attitude to ethics than was elicited in an accomplished philosopher by the theoretic argumentation of another who thought to handle ethics without much regard either to the phenomena of evolution or the problem of an ideal society. Already Mr. Bradley had seen that "Good, in the proper sense, implies the fulfilment of desire."[2] From that anything might follow, though the proposition actually ensues that, "in its denial that anything else beside pleasure is good, Hedonism must be met by a decided rejection."[3]

If the meaning here be that pain and frustration can be good in the sense of leading to good, the dispute is once more a logomachy, unless it be shown that men can rationally plan for their own pain and frustration by way of attaining good, merely because some pain and frustration in the past has been found to have a good sequel. The further strictures[4] on "the want of thoroughness shown by Hedonism in its attitude towards the intellect" would seem to recoil on the framer of the above-cited thesis about the danger of wishing to be better than the world. A discipline in concrete problems, once more, would appear to be the way to intellectual reform.

It would seem, indeed, that all ethical problems turn upon the problem of a perfectly faithful appraisement of truth, the quest for which is the discipline of disciplines. When that is attained we may look to have at once the best moral philosophy and the best practice, provided that the knowledge is duly diffused. Assuredly, as regards the moral sciences, we have still a long way to go; and it is but as furthering a possible step on the journey that these pages are written. Even the first step is resisted by those who implicitly or explicitly deny that truth is desirable, employing often the venerable paralogism that reason is not an adequate guide—a proposition which is the confutation of itself, its appeal being professedly to the authority of reason. Here we are once more faced by the fundamental differentiation of bias. If a man does not really care for the sheer scientific truth first and last, there is no

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 402, *note*. [2] *Id.* p. 403. [3] *Id.* p. 405. [4] *Id.* p. 407.

arguing with him, any more than with the man who cares not in his heart for justice or reciprocity.

Happily, however, men who affect to reason do mostly care for truth, even if they reason badly from presuppositions; as most men are something more than egoists even when admittedly seeking their own good. And it is in facing the concrete problems of conduct that they will find the antidote to the opiate of sheer theory. In its ultimate form that opiate is the reflection that since all pain, all suffered evil, is measurable only by the individual unit; since pain cannot be aggregated, and a million suffer no more than one can suffer, then it is vain to seek the good of all when we are sure that, do what we will, some will continue to suffer; and idle to call for the subordination of our own good to that of the many, since the many can sensate no more than one can. Theoretically, that is the dissolution of the command 'Live for Others,' reducing it to 'Live for Any One Other,' which cancels itself. It is only in considering all the ones as reciprocative entities that the moral self recovers its strength; and it is only in planning to give some measure of effect to all reciprocities that we pass from the paralysis of ethical abstraction to the moral functioning which makes us tolerable or acceptable to each other. That, and not the calculus of claim, is the ultimate truth.

So, finally, the facing of the ethical problem in terms of the problem of action yields the only solution of the ultimate dilemma as to blame of conduct realized to be the result of congenital structure. When we realize that misconduct can be a result of pathological conditions, that a Poe is the victim of brain lesion, that a Pope is conditioned by the "long disease, his life," and that the spineless character of a Coleridge is the outcome of diathesis and opium, we have made a step towards a naturalistic conception of 'sin.' When we ask further whether the criminal is not in turn—save in so far as he is a product of maleducation or stress of circumstance—a case of ill-formed though healthy brain, we are brought to the same standpoint. For the intuitionist, the theorist of 'free-will,' the dilemma is absolute; and he merely evades it by idly denying that brain structure in any degree determines character. For the critical utilitarian there is no dilemma. For him the bad character remains bad, baseness remains baseness, the liar a liar, the thief a thief; and his task is simply to try to guard himself and society against each form of evil in the best way, as society guards against the madman, in whose case even the free-willer recognizes the physical causation.

And in all cases alike the rational utilitarian, if he is true to his doctrine, is guided by the simple principle of minimizing evil, turning 'punishment' into the protection of society, reforming the criminal if and in so far as he is corrigible, and, by inevitably blaming baseness as what it is (since to describe it is to blame it), doing what blame can do to influence the ill-conditioned personality. His negative or repressive action proceeds on the same motive and principle as those of his constructive action. Thus he, and he alone, may hope to attain the maximum of justice with the minimum of severity—an ideal hardly glimpsed before ethics was expressly grounded on the principle of the well-being of each and all.

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